ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

PE 1505 .L6 1929 19980
Lewis, Charlton Miner
Principles of English
verse

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/principlesofengl0000char_n3y0

THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH VERSE

BY

CHARLTON MINER LEWIS, 1866-1923

Formerly Emily Sanford Professor of English Literature in Yale University

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE BY

CHAUNCEY BREWSTER TINKER

Sterling Professor of English Literature in Yale University

NEW HAVEN

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

London, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press

1929

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

COPYRIGHT 1929 BY YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1906 BY HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

PR
1505
.A6
1929

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE NEW EDITION

Cat. 23 Dec 52 W

This book passed out of print during the Great War, when the plates were, by an unfortunate accident, melted down without the author's knowledge. It is now restored to its friends, whose demand that it should again be made accessible, has become insistent as the years have lapsed. What changes Professor Lewis might have wished to make in a second edition and what advice he would have offered to those poets eager to release themselves from all restrictions of meter, the present editor does not presume to say. Mr. Lewis was himself a practitioner of the art here discussed, and, though generally ranging himself with the conservatives, there is evidence in his original verses that he was not unacquainted with the novel theories of versification or disinclined to reveal a certain sympathy with them. But, as a professional student of the history of poetry, he could not be unaware of their slightness of significance when set beside the majestic tradition of English versification. It was the peculiar gift of the author of these chapters to see things in due proportion; and it is, therefore, the union of the artist's passion for his medium and the scholar's knowledge of the practice of the past that distin-

19980

guishes this treatise. Catalogues of English verse-forms, histories of metric, and apologies for theories of verse are accessible to all and are certainly not to be sought in these pages, which constitute, rather, a reasoned discussion of underlying principles.

The lucidity, moderation, and balance of Mr. Lewis's mind might be illustrated from every page of this book. Those readers who seek to be amused by the violence of the partisan or excited by the blind ardor of the doctrinaire will find nothing here to their taste. But those poets who believe English prosody to be a craft, with its own body of rules and traditions, deriving a peculiar glory from the practice of its master-workmen, will examine the author's views with peculiar satisfaction; and the general reader will not fail to improve the opportunity to observe the technique of what is at once the most subtle and the most august of the arts practiced by mankind.

CHAUNCEY BREWSTER TINKER

New Haven, Connecticut
July 1, 1929

PREFACE

THIS little book is designed chiefly for "general readers." To such persons as enjoy poetry, but think they might enjoy it more if they found its metrical structure less bewildering, I think I may safely promise material assistance and satisfaction. English meters are very complicated in detail, but their fundamental principles are simple; and a knowledge of the fundamental principles is sufficient for sympathetic appreciation.

My statement of these principles will also, I trust, be of interest to scholars and professional metrists. They will readily detect my indebtedness to many former students of versification, but they will also find some things that are new both in theory and in method. My obligations are so obvious, and at the same time so general in character, that it is both unnecessary and impracticable to specify them all; but it is proper to say that but for an old essay (now too much neglected) by Coventry Patmore, and a suggestion once casually made in conversation by my colleague, Professor Goodell, this book might not have been written.

The principles of verse belong partly to science and partly to art. If I were writing only of science I should prefer to write impersonally; but as it is

I have made free use of the personal pronoun, thinking it best to distinguish clearly between conclusions based on scientific reasoning and conclusions based on individual taste.

C. M. L.

Yale University, 1906.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Rhythm and Meter . .	1
II.	The Pentameter Line . .	17
III.	Blank Verse	41
IV.	Rhymed Pentameters . .	60
V.	Miscellaneous Meters . .	85
VI.	Embellishments of Verse . .	118

The Principles of English Verse

CHAPTER I

RHYTHM AND METER

IF you pronounce these two sentences: "She told me she was sixteen years of age," and "She said her age was just sixteen," you will almost certainly pronounce "sixteen" with the accent on "six" in the first case and on "—teen" in the second. So when you say "That judgment was unjust," you put a marked accent on the final syllable of the adjective, but when you speak of "the parable of the unjust steward," you probably give its two syllables nearly equal weight. There are many other English words whose accentuation varies according to circumstances, and the reason is that we instinctively try to speak rhythmically. Before we can understand the structure of English verse we must pay some attention to the nature and workings of this instinct, for verse is only an elaboration and refinement of our instinctive mode of expression; and before we can enter upon even this examination, we must ask ourselves what is rhythm?

Rhythm may be roughly defined as a recurrence of similar phenomena at regular intervals

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

of time. No word less general than phenomena would suffice for the purposes of definition. The rhythm of verse or music, to be sure, is commonly found in the recurrence of similar sounds; but these are special cases, and sound is not essential to rhythm. A deaf man can see the rhythm of a pendulum, and indeed a man deprived of all five senses could feel the rhythmic swaying of a railroad train. But while in the first part of the definition it is safest to be vague, in the last part it is necessary to be insistently specific. Regularity of time-intervals is a *sine qua non* of rhythm. The fact needs no proof, for it is obvious; but it deserves some emphasis, because many persons have never observed it, and it is a fundamental principle in the whole theory of verse.

Now to rhythm in this sense we have an instinctive leaning. When you drive a nail, you swing your hammer rhythmically. When you walk or run, your steps are rhythmical, and you would find it very disagreeable to walk in any other way. Your respiration, the movement of your jaw in chewing, and that of your hands when you rub down after a bath, or when you brush your teeth,—all are rhythmical. Students of the subject who are sentimentally in-

clined have noted also the rhythms of inanimate nature, in the ocean billows, the swaying of trees, the revolution of the earth, and the processes of the suns; and they have seen in all these phenomena one of the mysterious harmonies of the universe. There is indeed much suggestion here for philosophy and for poetry, but an elementary scientific explanation of our human instinct will suffice for present purposes. Such an explanation, of course, is found in the principle of economy. The reason why we walk rhythmically is that the momentum of the body would make an unrhythmical gait comparatively laborious. We strike rhythmical blows with a hammer because we can do so almost automatically. There is here no apparent economy of physical force, but there is a great economy of attention. We can breathe irregularly without any special muscular effort, but as soon as we stop thinking about it our chests begin to move rhythmically again.

It is an inevitable result of this economical instinct of ours that we tend also to speak rhythmically. In every sentence that we utter there are certain words or syllables that are more important than the others,—certain syllables which are in the foreground of our

thought and which we therefore pronounce with greater emphasis; and our instinctive tendency is to separate those syllables, in speaking, by regular intervals of time. In any simple commonplace of conversation we speak rhythmically if we conveniently can. Thus when you ask "How do you do this morning?" you probably emphasize the syllables how, do, and morn; and though between the first two of these there are two unemphasized syllables, while between the last two there is only one, yet you allow no more time for the two than for the one. You hurry over them so as to reach the emphatic syllable at the proper time; and then you make a slight pause and pronounce the word "this" just the least bit more slowly, so as *not* to reach the next emphatic syllable too soon.

Suppose you ask the question in a mood of somewhat warmer cordiality, and so emphasize the second word instead of the first:—"How *do* you do this morning?" You will still speak the whole sentence rhythmically; but in order to make it rhythmical you will pronounce the word "you" in a somewhat more deliberate manner than before, in order to leave an adequate interval before the second "do."

Try now pronouncing a sentence of slightly

different form:—"You are a bad man." You emphasize three words, namely, "you," "bad," and "man," and between the last two of these there are no unstressed syllables; but do you not still maintain a regular rhythm? You do so by dwelling on the "bad" long enough to fill up the rhythmical gap. If you substitute the word wicked for bad you will not allow it any more time in the utterance; and even if you say "You are a marvelous man" you will still preserve the same rhythm in your sentence. This is not because the word bad is in itself as long a word as marvelous, for it obviously is not; it is because of your instinct for rhythm. If now you try still another change, substituting astonishing for marvelous, you will find, perhaps, that the whole sentence requires more time than it did in its original form; but your instinct will still be to equalize its two parts. You will hurry over the syllables "you are an as—" a little bit faster than you hurried before; and you will either leave a pause that is just barely perceptible after "astonishing" or else dwell ever so slightly upon the nasal sound in which that word ends. Probably your instinct, in this case, will not fully satisfy itself, and the sentence will be only approximately rhythmical; but you

will at least have made an unconscious effort toward regularity.

I have spoken of our instinct for rhythm as scientifically traceable to the principle of economy. In the particular department of speech it does not seem that a very great economy of attention is attained by rhythmical utterance, and it is probably true that if this were an isolated activity no rhythmical instinct would have been developed in it. But no human activity is isolated. In one kind of work we profit by experience in other kinds; and the human race, in its long evolution, has from the principle of economy developed a universal aesthetic impulse. From our primeval ancestors, groping vaguely through dark centuries of unconscious experiment, we have inherited a "love" of rhythm; and this love of rhythm, this craving for regularity in the time-intervals between our muscular or mental efforts, is what causes the rhythm of speech.

Now this rhythm is not perfect. If you tested your speech with the delicate measuring instruments of a psychologist's laboratory, you would find it only approximately rhythmical. The instinct is satisfied by a mere approach to regularity. If, moreover, instead of considering

short detached sentences like those presented above, you examine your manner of pronouncing long paragraphs of speech, you will find that your fluency is here and there interrupted by irregular pauses, or accelerations, or retards. If you open casually such a book as a Latin grammar or a textbook in geometry and read a paragraph or two, your utterance may hardly be rhythmical at all, for the sentences upon which you try the experiment may be so disjointed and fragmentary as to offer little opportunity to your rhythmical instinct; but prose of more dignified and literary character you will generally find markedly rhythmical, when read in a perfectly natural manner. There will be many irregularities, but they will be no more than interruptions; and between them your utterance will tend to resume its normal regularity of flow, even though this regularity be often only approximate.

For a specific example of the interrupted rhythm of ordinary prose, I quote from the excellent little manual of *English Versification* by Mr. James C. Parsons. "In prose, the words generally follow any order which most naturally expresses the thought, without regard to the number or frequency of the accents. Thus, in

this sentence from Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop*: 'Níght is génerally my tíme for wálking; sáve in the coúntry, I séldom go oút until áfter dárk.' Here no regularity is observable in the occurrence of the stress. This is simple prose." Mr. Parsons uses this sentence to show the *un*-rhythmical character of ordinary prose, as distinguished from the rhythmical character of verse; for he thinks that verse differs from prose "chiefly in a certain regularity of movement . . . called rhythm." But in the very passage which he cites to prove the difference, is there not as regular a rhythm as in ordinary verse?

The fact is that Mr. Parsons, like other metrists, is mistaken in supposing that rhythm is a distinguishing feature of verse. Verse is no more truly rhythmical than prose. In neither form of speech is the rhythm perfect, and in prose it is likely to be even more irregular and disjointed than it is in verse; but it is a property of both. The distinguishing feature of verse is not rhythm, but meter; and we must next form a clear notion of the difference between the two.

For a convenient illustration I will take a fine old sentence from the Book of Genesis, a char-

acteristic specimen of the beautiful rhythmical prose of our King James version; and I will mark with an accent those syllables which I myself would naturally emphasize. "And Gód sáw that the wíckedness of mán was greát in the eárth, and that évery imaginátion of the thoúghts of his heárt was ónly évil contínually." I do not pretend that my way of reading this passage is the only way, or even the best way; but as it is certainly not unnatural, and as it probably does not differ materially from other people's ways, I venture to explain it in detail. My reading is satisfyingly rhythmical,—that is to say, it leaves between the accented syllables intervals either exactly or very nearly equal,—down to the word "earth"; there I make a relatively long pause; but I afterward resume my former regularity of utterance, and continue it to the end. The sentence is thus divided into two main rhythmical periods. I wish to call special attention to this division, because it is of considerable importance, and the expression "rhythmical period" will recur again and again in this book.

I have admitted that others would read this sentence differently. Some persons, for instance, would make a slight pause after the word

"man"; and a few, perhaps, would pause there long enough to make a distinct break in the rhythm, so that the words "And God saw that the wickedness of man" might constitute a distinct rhythmical period, while the words "was great in the earth" would constitute a second. Many readers, I am sure, would pause in this way after the word "heart" in the second member of the sentence; and perhaps others again would separate their rhythmical periods in still other ways. But these are matters of detail. The essential fact, which I am sure cannot be seriously disputed, is that everyone will read the sentence rhythmically, separating those syllables upon which he lays stress by approximately equal intervals of time, except where by pausing for breath or for emphasis he makes an end of one rhythmical period and begins another.

But while this sentence is rhythmical, it is far from metrical. Between the stressed syllables there are sometimes two that are unstressed, sometimes only one, and sometimes three. In one case there are actually five ("évery imaginátion"), and in another ("Gód sáw") there are none at all. There is no fixed proportion between the number of stressed and

the number of unstressed syllables; the rhythm of prose is governed by no numerical law. In meter, as its name implies, the number of syllables is *measured* with more or less strictness. In the commonest kinds of English verse there is a fairly regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, so that exactly ten syllables are usually found in a verse of five stresses; in some other forms of verse there are exactly two syllables without stress for every one that is stressed; while in others again the number varies from one to two, or perhaps even more widely; but in all there must be enough regularity to convey a sense of measure and proportion, or the verse is not verse at all, it is merely prose.

Furthermore, our sentence from Genesis could not be printed in lines of equal length, nor indeed in lines which in length and rhythmical structure should bear any regular relation to each other, without grotesque results. If we wished to turn the passage into verse, we should have to alter it not only by introducing some regularity into the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, but also by contriving some sort of division into lines, or individual verses, which should bear some numerical rela-

tion to each other, and which should end at least with the ends of words, if not with the ends of rhythmical periods. Let us try the experiment.

> And God then saw the wickedness of man
> Was great upon the earth, and that his heart
> Imagined only evil all the time.

Of course I have weakened the passage shamefully, turning glorious prose into very ordinary verse; but the verse is not positively bad even from the artistic point of view; and scientifically it is entirely correct. It is not more rhythmical than the prose sentence, but it is rigidly and mechanically metrical.*

Now in verse as in prose it must be observed that our instinct does not demand exact equality of the time-intervals. If a critic should force our definition of rhythm upon us with verbal minuteness, we might have to say that verse, like prose, is not really rhythmical at all, that it only approximates rhythm; but as our present aim is a practical understanding of verse rather than a scientific definition, I shall permit myself to use words with some looseness. I shall speak

* A metrical peculiarity of the first line will be considered in the next chapter.

of verse, therefore, as rhythmical; yet, even at the risk of Hibernianism, I shall at the same time insist that the essence of rhythm is equality, but that in verse, as in prose, absolute equality is often not present.

Indeed, to read verse in perfectly even time would be to make it insufferably monotonous. Children recite their Mother Goose in this way, because their instinct is strong and crude; but older persons are repelled rather than attracted by that kind of sing-song, and much of the beauty of verse, to a refined taste, is due to the perpetual checks and accelerations with which its rhythm is varied. These checks and accelerations are frequently introduced by ourselves, as we read, and are symptoms of our own varying emotional sympathy and interest; but often, too, they are necessitated by the very words of the text, and are manifestations of the poet's art. Here, for example, are two lines from Tennyson's "Ulysses":

> The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
> Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.

Even the childish lover of sing-song would hardly read these verses in strictly even time.

A person of mature years realizes that much of their beauty is due to the irregularity of their tempo. But the essential fact about these, as about all lines of verse, is that the *principle* of regularity underlies them throughout.

We touch here upon one of the fundamentals of aesthetics, a general law which in some form or other is found enforcing itself everywhere in the arts of music and poetry,—if not, indeed, in all the arts. As we are not at present concerned with the general principles of aesthetics, I shall not try to state this law in general terms, but will only indicate, from time to time, its applications to verse. For purposes of convenient reference we may call it the law of conflict, and in so far as it applies to the particular matter in hand it is as follows.

In reading (or writing) verse we are guided by our instinct for strict equality in time-intervals, and deep down below our conscious minds there is a sense of an ideal rhythmical scheme, in which the time-intervals are exactly equal. The actual movement of the verse does not exactly correspond with this ideal scheme; it plays all about it, swaying back and forth like a pendulum, perhaps, now behind and now ahead of the ideal; but it never wholly forsakes

it. The pleasure which verse gives to an educated taste is partly due to this perpetual conflict between the actual and the ideal. Sometimes for a while the verse moves in even step with the ideal scheme, but surely sooner or later it breaks away; the poet's language, or the feeling stirred by his thought, proves a little too strong for our rhythmical instinct, and escapes from the fetters; but the instinct has not been quelled, and it speedily asserts itself again.

This, after all, is a matter of comparatively small importance just here; but I point it out because in later chapters this same law of conflict will prove of very great importance, and it is well to be familiar with it in its crudest manifestation. It is worth noting, also, that all that I have said thus far about the law applies to prose just as well as to verse. Inasmuch as the rhythms of prose are in some respects less simple than those of verse, persons whose ears are particularly sensitive to these manifestations of the law (and perhaps less so to others which we shall consider later) find a keener delight in the sensuous qualities of prose than in those of verse. I myself, while I regard verse as the highest known form of expression, admit that in some respects prose has the advantage, and

that it requires a far finer ear to do justice to all its rhythmical glories than to appreciate the rudimentary qualities of meter.

CHAPTER II

THE PENTAMETER LINE

THE favorite meter for dignified poetry is that in which each normal verse has ten syllables, alternately stressed and unstressed:

For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

In the age of Queen Anne this kind of verse was written almost always in rhyming couplets, and in that combination it is still called "heroic verse." The same meter was so magnificently used without rhyme by Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, and many others of our great poets, that the name "blank verse" belongs to it exclusively, though there was originally no obvious reason why the name should not cover rhymeless lines of other sorts as well. The Spenserian stanza is mainly composed of lines of the same type, and so are divers kinds of stanzas made familiar by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Byron, and others. This meter is therefore by far the most conspicuous of all; and, as it happens, it is also the most interesting and significant in its structure. We will examine it as it appears in the individual line before we

consider its combinations in couplet or stanza; and for our present purposes we may take examples from any sort of poem, regardless of context.

It is first to be noted that the stress in verse frequently seems to fall on syllables which are hardly capable of bearing it. Unemphatic words like "of" and "in" and unemphatic syllables of long words, often count for as much in the rhythm of a line as the words of most importance. For example, in our versified sentence from Genesis we have

And God then saw the wickedness of man,

where the last syllable of "wickedness" seems to take up as much space as the first in the rhythmical scheme, and to be treated like any other accented syllable. Is it accented at all? Many readers will say yes; that it bears a light secondary accent, and hence is not at all exceptional. For my part I doubt whether I stress it more than the middle syllable of the word; but I am sure that whether I do or not makes little difference in the rhythm of the line. I pronounce the final syllable *at the proper time,* allowing the proper interval before it and the proper interval after it. The effect is as if a

runner should put one foot in a hole and so fail to touch ground. We can perhaps imagine him going on without breaking step; the rhythm of his pace is maintained, though a single beat is weakened. In all rhythms, as I insisted in the first chapter, regularity of time is the prime essential, and in verse the stresses are merely the pegs on which the rhythm of the line is hung. By taking out one peg you will not necessarily let the whole line collapse.

Indeed there is a sense in which we may deny that a peg has been removed. I should still describe the line as one of five stresses, for the fourth stress is theoretically present; and it is actually present in that subliminal consciousness in which we carry our ideal scheme, as explained in the first chapter. That ideal scheme is a regular movement from stress to stress, but the actual movement of verse never coincides with it very long. The exigencies of language hardly permit it. It would be *possible,* indeed, to write verse in which every stress should be real and substantial,—continuous sequences of lines like

For fools rush in where angels fear to tread;

but such verse would not be written by an ar-

tist. An individual line or two may be highly effective, but the elephantine tramp, if long continued, would be as unpleasant as the childish sing-song recitation of Mother Goose. Hence every poet grades his stresses all the way from the heaviest emphasis down to a mere cipher, and does so not merely for convenience but for artistic effect. In this respect, again, verse illustrates the law of conflict. The ideal scheme persists in our minds, and the exigencies of language, though perpetually at war with its demands, are never able to overthrow it. This conflict, like that considered in the first chapter, is one of the sources of the pleasure that good verse affords.

Tennyson and Fitzgerald once amused themselves by a contest to determine which could compose the "weakest Wordsworthian line imaginable." Between them they produced the following:

A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman.

Wordsworth, to be sure, is one of the very greatest of English poets; but this is a delicious parody upon the banalities into which he sometimes lapsed. Of course it hits the prosaic quality of some of Wordsworth's sentiments;

but the feature of the line that specially concerns us is the weakness of some of its stresses. The rhythm seems to gather itself together by a sort of consumptive effort on the syllables "Wilk—" and "cler—," but after each of these it trails off into a breathless collapse. The law of conflict lends no support to a line in which the ideal scheme is so completely put to rout.

Of course there are noble lines in English poetry with as many as two weak stresses. When Young writes

> Dim miniature of greatness absolute

no one thinks of weakness. The difference between this line and the foregoing parody is not so much in the aggregate strength of the stresses as in the manner of distributing their strength and placing the weaker ones. A classification of the arrangements that are good and those that are bad would be somewhat pedantic and not very instructive, and I shall not attempt one. Moreover, it must be noted that the weakness of the parody is as much in the sense as in the sound. It does sound deplorably feeble, but I am not sure that noble words with exactly the same cadence might not sound fairly satisfactory. The truth is that we can never

wholly dissociate sense from sound, and that for this reason the "laws of verse" are unstable things and must be stated with extreme caution, if at all.

Just one aspect of these weak stresses remains to be noted. If you say, in ordinary prose, "That water is the Atlantic," you may naturally lay a slight stress on "is"; but if you say "That water is Chesapeake Bay," the same word seems incapable of receiving any stress whatever. It is absolutely as important as before, but there is a certain difference in its relative importance. In the former case it is one of four unemphatic syllables, and your rhythmical instinct is very likely to pick it out as a convenient point to alight upon in mid-flight. In the second sentence, with the substantial word Chesapeake looming up just beyond, the insignificant copula is overlooked.

Now in verse a great many stresses are to be justified in this same manner. Compare, for instance, two lines from a speech of Satan in *Paradise Lost:*

His ministers of vengeance and pursuit

and

Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now.

In the former, "and" is stressed; in the latter, it is equally important, but unstressed. It is a common error to regard the stress in the former case as due to a mere convention of verse. It is not the stress of rhetorical emphasis, to be sure, nor that of verbal accent; but it is a perfectly natural speech-rhythm-stress, and is as proper to prose as to verse. It is true that stresses occur in verse which would be omitted in prose. This is because in reading verse we become accustomed to the regular recurrence of stresses on alternate syllables, and are therefore ready to let our rhythm rest upon light particles which in prose we might pass over. I doubt, however, the wisdom of calling even these stresses purely conventional, or treating them as due to versifiers' license; and at all events those which demand such treatment are comparatively very rare. The reader may perhaps gain some further light on this subject by turning back to the passage from Genesis in the first chapter, and comparing the treatment there accorded to the word "wickedness" with the treatment of the same word in our metrical version.

We must now proceed to other variations

from the normal scheme. No poet maintains for any length of time the regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. A limited variety is always sought and attained by occasional inversions of the normal order. This inversion is commonest at the beginning of the line, as in

Tears fróm the depth of some divine despair.

This verse is like most others in having just five stresses and just ten sȳllables; but two of the unstressed syllables are together after the first stress. Note, however, that though the order of syllables is peculiar, the rhythmic intervals are, as usual, approximately equal.

Less frequently, but still often, a similar inversion is found in the middle of a verse, as in

A mind not to be changed by place or time.

This change is less frequent because it is more violent, since it brings together in the same line two stressed as well as two unstressed syllables. In the line cited the rhythm is regular, as before; for we instinctively dwell on "mind" long enough, and hurry over "to be" fast enough, to keep the two intervals approximately equal. The irregularity is in the meter, not in the

rhythm. It will be clear, however, upon reflection, that this variation is not so easily manageable in the middle of a line as at the beginning. When a grammatical pause occurs it easily fills out the rhythm, as in the third line of this passage:

> But that the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country from whose bourne
> No traveler returns, puzzles the will.

The inversion here is as easy as one at the beginning of the line; but if there is no such pause the two adjacent words which are to bear the stresses must be important and emphatic. Otherwise the reader will hardly perceive the poet's design; he will fail to dwell on the first long enough, or will pass lightly over the second, seeking a better resting place farther on.

There are two curious lines in *King Lear,* spoken by Kent near the end of the play:

> I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;
> My master calls me, I must not say no.

One's impulse is to read these in the rhythm of "Where are you going to, my pretty maid," thus:

> I′ have a joúrney sir, shórtly to gó;
> My máster cálls me, I múst not say nó.

But clearly Shakespeare was writing pentameter verses, and intended that the word "sir" should be stressed and followed by a pause, thus:

> I háve a joúrney, sír,—shórtly to gó;
> My máster cálls me, I′ must nót say nó.

These lines, as pronounced on the stage by an intelligent actor, are entirely satisfactory; but in a modern poem, addressed to readers rather than auditors, they would seem very careless.

The reader may well exercise his own judgment upon the two following lines, the first Shelley's and the second Milton's:

> The lone couch of his everlasting sleep.

> Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil.

To my individual taste Shelley's line is peculiarly beautiful, while Milton's, considered by itself, is not quite satisfactory because its rhythm lacks inevitableness. It will readily be understood, however, that a line cannot fairly be separated from its context. With any true lover of Milton's magnificent rhythms who protests that this is a happy instance of Milton's skill in perpetual variation, I have no quarrel, though I do not share his opinion.

Such inversions as these are sometimes doubled. Thus Tennyson wrote:

> But Arthur, looking downward as he passed,
> Felt the light of her eyes into his life
> Smite on the sudden;

and a similar effect is seen in the middle of this line from Milton:

> As a despite done against the Most High.

Even triple inversions are rarely seen, as in Shelley's line:

> Harmonizing silence-without a sound.

But in all such cases of metrical inversion it must be observed first, that the poet does not mean to abandon his rhythm, and second, that he does not change the total number of syllables.

This latter fact is curiously noteworthy. If poets write such lines as have been quoted, why not just as well write

> Tears from depths of some divine despair,

or

> Felt the light of eyes into his life,

or

> The lone couch of everlasting sleep?

These would possess the same rhythm, though they have but nine syllables apiece. Such lines were in fact common in Chaucer and in the Elizabethan dramatists, but in poetry later than the seventeenth century you must search long before you find them.

The modern ban upon such lines is, I think, purely a matter of convention. I doubt the existence of any sufficient reason, apart from convention, why such lines should not satisfy us. In verse of four stresses similar truncations are common, as in "Il Penseroso":

> Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, steadfast, and demure.

In this meter lines of seven and lines of eight syllables are universally felt to be congruous. Why then, except for convention, should the heroic line never be shortened to nine syllables? To my own ear a shortened line would be as unpleasing, I think, as to anyone's; but this is not because it would offend my natural rhythmical instinct. It is because through familiarity with the classic regularity of the masters my ear has learned to demand that the heroic line shall have not only five beats but also its full quota of ten syllables. My ear expects that in

general the stressed and unstressed syllables will alternate; and when this alternation is agreeably interrupted by the omission of an unstressed syllable, my ear demands that the omission be atoned for by a doubling of syllables later in the line. There are historical reasons for this convention—reasons traceable to the influence of French and Latin verse-forms; but these do not concern us here.

While the number of syllables may not be reduced, it is frequently augumented. An eleventh syllable is often added, making a "feminine ending," as in

> Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness;

and doubled light syllables in the interior of the verse are very common, as in

> Dim miniature of greatness absolute;
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine;
> O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence;
> Of man's first disobedience and the fruit;
> To set himself in glory above his peers.

Milton, whose taste was largely influenced by classical and Italian poets, seems to have regarded most of his blank verse as rigidly decasyllabic. In *Paradise Lost,* especially, all lines

which have supernumerary syllables were probably normalized in the poet's own consciousness by elision, or syncope, or some similar process. For example, Milton's understanding of the last line above cited was pretty certainly something like this:

To set himself in glor yabove his peers.

There are no lines in *Paradise Lost* which cannot be reduced to the normal by some such device; but to our unsophisticated ears the process is often overviolent, and I myself do not try to read Milton as I think he intended. Most poets frankly admit extra syllables in their verse, and most readers are content to find such syllables even in Milton.

These extra syllables, however, are generally of the sort that may be very lightly pronounced. None of the lines above quoted *seem* exceptional, because the change in the meter does not affect the rhythmic interval. When unstressed syllables of more substantial weight are doubled, the effect is more striking; and the frequent use even of very light doublings will attract attention. Thus when Mr. Moody writes

Whispered us Nature's secrets, given to our hand,

or when Tennyson writes

O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me,

and even

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces,

we cannot ignore the metrical variation. Such peculiarities are a distinctive feature of Tennyson's style. He has shown extraordinary skill in manipulating them, and to my ear his best blank verse gives unalloyed pleasure; but I think he has carried this liberty to the limit of safety. Some of his imitators, like Mr. Stephen Phillips, have carried it even beyond that point. The pleasure which verse gives is due largely to the conflict between the poet's thought and the ideal regularity of the scheme; we like to see the thought cramped within artificial bounds, and only occasionally asserting its independence; and poets who are too forgetful of the scheme deprive us of the pleasure of the conflict. They sacrifice too much for the appearance of spontaneity, not realizing that art must and should be largely artifice.

There remains but one common kind of variation to be considered, but it is somewhat

more difficult of analysis than any others. The following lines illustrate it in various forms:

(1) Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain. (Byron.)
(2) Disasters in the sun, and the moist star. (*Hamlet.*)
(3) In her mild lights the starry spirits dance. (Shelley.)
(4) That I may sit and pour out my sad sprite. (Fletcher.)

In the first specimen many readers will feel that we have merely an example of weak stress, like those already noted; that while the word "the" is wholly unemphatic, and is actually less strongly stressed than "rent," yet it occupies the place of the fourth stress in the ideal scheme; and that the fourth and fifth rhythmic intervals fall respectively between "tal—" and "the" and between "the" and "plain." We may indicate this reading graphically by a grave accent:

Then tóre with bloódy tálon thè rent plaín.

The effect is like that sometimes produced by the falling of a logical emphasis upon a rhythmically unstressed word, as in Shakespeare's line:

That I′ *did* lóve, for nów my lóve is tháwed.

You may emphasize "did" as vehemently as all the rest of the line put together, yet you have no difficulty in recognizing that "I," "love," and "now" are the real bearers of the rhythm. So in Byron's line, the unimportance of "the" as compared with "rent" is immaterial; it may not receive any stress, but it comes at the stress-time.

But there is another way of reading the line. Many persons put the fourth stress on "rent"; and they leave between "tal—" and "rent" and between "rent" and "plain" approximately equal intervals; or at least they *feel* the intervals to be approximately equal. According to this interpretation, the line is like the specimens of inversion already considered, but with this difference: here the stress is postponed instead of anticipated; and the two metrical stresses that come together are preceded, not followed, by the two unstressed syllables.

Either of these two ways of reading Byron's line is proper enough, but I am inclined to prefer still a third method,—a kind of compromise between them. I myself read it, I think, with what the metrists call a "hovering accent."

That is, I let the imaginary beat of the fourth stress fall somewhere between the word "the" and the word "rent"; but I cannot say exactly where. I am not sure that either word comes exactly at the stress-time; but between "talon" and "plain" there are certainly two rhythmic intervals, and the intermediate stress seems somehow to be taken care of by the words "the rent" jointly.

It may be questioned which way of reading Byron's line is best, and I am unable to say which was Byron's own way. But either way is in accordance with the principles of verse, and readers of poetry will find lines in which now one way and now another seems obligatory. In the line from *Hamlet* (the second in my list) I should probably let "moist" almost monopolize the fourth stress. In the third specimen, I feel less certain as to the share in the first stress that I would give to "mild"; and some persons may even put the stress on the first word in the line. In the fourth specimen I would *not* put the whole fourth stress on "sad," though some metrists do so; and I am not sure that I would put any of it there. This last line is a very pleasing one, and a striking example of the law of conflict.

I transcribe a few lines from Shelley's "Alastor," as illustrative of all the principles discussed in this chapter. I shall add no specific explanations. The reader, however, cannot fail to see that the passage is a beautiful exemplification of the general law, and that all its variations of meter, though sometimes puzzling, are yet clearly reducible to some one or another of the types already explained.

> Mother of this unfathomable world!
> Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
> Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched
> Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
> And my heart ever gazes on the depth
> Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
> In charnels and on coffins, where black death
> Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
> Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
> Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
> Thy messenger, to render up the tale
> Of what we are.

In the foregoing paragraphs I have avoided all mention of the word foot. It would often have been more convenient to use it, and I have been put to some circumlocution to escape from it; but I wished, even at the risk of awkwardness, to make it clear that verse can be under-

stood and appreciated by one who knows nothing of foot-structure or scansion. Feet are not organic elements of rhythm. Analysis of verse by feet is like analysis of pictures by square inches; it may be very convenient to point out a certain figure as being three inches from the top and two inches from the right-hand side of a painting, or to say that the third or fourth foot of a verse is inverted or defective; but in neither case is such an index-method anything more than a labor-saving convenience.

The convenience, however, of description by feet is so great that it is idle to object to it on theoretical grounds. Even the fact that our names of feet are borrowed from the ancients, and that the rhythm of their verse was measured by the length of syllables instead of the intervals between accents, does not forbid us to use those names in description of our own verse; for they have become so fixed by long misuse in our vocabulary that the misuse has acquired a prescriptive right to recognition; and nobody has devised a better system. I therefore feel at liberty to use the old names freely; and in reintroducing them here I shall merely introduce an occasional caveat against misunderstandings.

The feet most commonly named by our metrists are the iambus, trochee, spondee, pyrrhic, dactyl, and anapaest. In the Greek and Latin metrics an iambus consisted of a short and a long syllable (⏑–) and a trochee was an inverted iambus (–⏑). In reference to English verse we mean by an iambus a foot of two syllables of which the second is stressed, while in a trochee the first is stressed. The length of the syllables is disregarded. Thus under the classical system such a word as pittance might be called an iambus (if I am right in thinking the first syllable distinctly short and the second long), while under our system it is certainly a trochee, for the first syllable is accented and the second is not. Hereafter we need not concern ourselves with the classical conception; and we may as well even use the convenient symbols – and ⏑ for stressed and unstressed syllables respectively. With this understanding, we may define all the feet above enumerated by the following symbols.

Iambus	⏑–
Trochee	–⏑
Spondee	––
Pyrrhic	⏑⏑
Dactyl	–⏑⏑
Anapaest	⏑⏑–

The typical iambic line consists of five iambi; but several other feet are sometimes admitted, by substitution. Thus such a line as Shelley's

The lone couch of his everlasting sleep

is described by most metrists as having a trochee in the second place, and is scanned as follows:

The lóne/coúch of/his év/erlást/ing sleép.

I see no good reason why it should not equally well be divided in this way:

The lóne/coúch/of his év/erlást/ing sleép,

with an anapaest in the third place and a monosyllabic foot in the second. This indeed comes nearer than the other division to actual description of the line's rhythm; but as neither method is exact or scientifically truthful, and as many metrists prefer to deny the existence of monosyllabic feet, we may as well accept the former scansion. In doing so, however, we are well aware that the so-called feet "couch of" and "—erlast" are not rhythmical entities at all. They are not real units of the organism, they are merely sections cut off by artificial lines of

cleavage, and they exist only for convenience of description.

Metrists usually say that the pyrrhic is sometimes admitted in iambic verse; and some leading authorities point out that it generally is found with a spondee immediately after it. Such is the description of Byron's line

Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain.

The pyrrhic is "—on the" and the spondee is "rent plain." As we saw a few pages back, there are two or three ways of reading this line, and either way is fairly indicated by this scansion; but of course it is far from exact. Feet are arbitrary and phantom concepts, and this description of the line does not touch the really vital fact about its rhythm,—the underlying regularity of its time-scheme. Moreover, if we choose to read it with the fourth stress on "rent," and a rhythmic interval between "rent" and "plain," it seems illogical to describe "rent plain" as a single foot at all. The two words belong to different rhythmic units, and it would be less untrue to say that "—on the rent" is an anapaest and "plain" a monosyllabic foot. Indeed a spondee (if the term denotes a foot of two stressed syllables) is, from our point of

view, an impossibility in English verse; for common sense seems to demand a separate foot for each rhythmic interval, and consequently for each stress. This objection has been strongly urged by many metrists, and there is much dispute about the scansion of the line quoted. It seems to me, however, that all such disputes are teapot tempests. Since feet are merely matters of convenience, and rival systems of scansion merely different devices for attaining convenience at the expense of scientific accuracy, it seems useless to spin theories about them. I am in the habit of speaking of pyrrhics, anapaests, trochees, and what not, whenever it becomes convenient to do so; and if my use of such terms ever appears unsystematic, I frankly confess that it really is so, and that I do not greatly care to avoid such an appearance.

CHAPTER III

BLANK VERSE

I HAVE remarked that the decasyllabic line is the favorite in English poetry. The reasons for its preëminence are best seen not in single lines but in continuous passages.

One great advantage of this meter is its unsymmetrical character. A line of five stresses cannot be divided into two like parts. Lines of four stresses often fall naturally into symmetrical halves, as in this passage from Byron:

> Yes, love indeed is light from heaven,
> A spark of that immortal fire
> With angels shared, by Allah given,
> To lift from earth our low desire.

This equal division is not necessary, to be sure, but it must be of frequent occurrence; and though such verses as those quoted may be very beautiful in themselves, long poems require more variety than is possible in this meter. The inevitable tendency to sing-song is hostile to both dignity and subtlety. Of six-stress verse the same may be said, with even more emphasis. Here is a passage from Drayton:—one is

conscious of a slight rhythmical break not only at the end but also in the middle of each line.

The Naiads and the Nymphs extremely overjoyed,
And on the winding banks all busily employed,
Upon this joyful day, some dainty chaplets twine;
Some others chosen out, with fingers neat and fine
Brave anadems do make.

It is evident that the five-stress verse is not merely capable of greater variety than these forms, but that it is quite incapable of this particular sing-song monotony. Nevertheless, a bad poet could produce equally unpleasing effects with it. Consider, for example, these three lines:

The sójournèrs of Góshen whò behéld
His mínistèrs of véngeance àndpursuít
Transfíx us tò the bóttom òf this gúlf.

This is almost exactly the sing-song of such comic verse as this of Gilbert's (which I venture to quote from memory):

When the enterprising burglar isn't burgling,
When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,
Then he loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling
And to listen to the merry village chime.

The three lines quoted are in fact all from *Paradise Lost,* and are singly unexceptionable.

Of course they are not consecutive; Milton's ear would have tolerated no such enormity; but I have wickedly set them together to illustrate, in an extreme way, the danger of monotony in blank verse. The avoidance of such dangers is of course an elementary matter; but the illustration will also suggest, in a negative way, the manner in which variety affords charm to blank verse. Any of the passages to be hereafter cited for other purposes may serve for an example.

The reader will feel that good verse always makes its appeal to his ear partly by this variety; but occasionally, even in *Paradise Lost,* one may find passages that are conspicuously lacking in this respect. One such is in the introductory invocation.

> What in me is dark
> Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
> That, to the highth of this great argument,
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men.

The lines ending in "argument" and "Providence" are strikingly alike, even to the weak final cadences; and in this close of a glorious exordium I have always felt an unfortunate flatness. But in no great poet will you find such

things on every page, and in Milton you must look far for them.

A still more important way of giving variety, and hence charm, to blank verse, is by "varying the pauses." As we saw in the first chapter, a grammatical or rhetorical pause marks the end, in prose, of a rhythmical period. It has the same effect in verse. At the pause comes the end of one sequence of equal intervals of time (or approximately equal intervals) and the beginning of another. The pause may be long or short, according to the sense of the context or the caprice of the reader; but it is there, actually or potentially, and its effect is manifest. Now these pauses may occur anywhere in a line of blank verse: thus, at the end, as in

> Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven;

or near the middle, as in

> To be or not to be, that is the question;

or close to either beginning or end, as in this passage:

> Add the humble shrub,
> And bush with frizzled hair implicit; last
> Rose, as in dance, the stately trees.

But in all the best blank verse, the successive rhythmical periods are generally so ordered that they occupy different parts of the lines. A familiar example from Milton will serve; and I choose a specimen of his verse at its best.

Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,—
Said then the lost archangel,—this the seat
That we must change for heaven? this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right; farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equaled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors, hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.

The best way to appraise the peculiar merit of this kind of verse is to compare it with some that is inferior; and I choose for the purpose a passage from Surrey's *Aeneid,* the earliest blank verse in our literature.

With this the sky gan whirl about the sphere;
The cloudy night gan thicken from the sea,

With mantles spread that clokèd earth and skies,
And eke the treason of the Greekish guile.
The watchmen lay dispersed, to take their rest,
Whose wearied limbs sound sleep had then oppressed,
When well in order comes the Grecian fleet
From Tenedon towards the coasts well known,
By friendly silence of the quiet moon.

In Surrey's verse almost every line is a rhythmical period in itself, while in Milton's there is a perpetual variety. The first rhythmical period (as I read the Milton passage) consists perhaps of the first five syllables of the first line; the second, of the rest of the line; the third, of seven syllables of the second line; the fourth, of the rest of that line and six syllables of the third; and so on. We find no two periods alike until we reach the seventh line, where "Whom reason hath equaled" seems fairly to reproduce the rhythm of "Is this the region."

Now of course it is a very simple matter to write verse with pauses variously placed. Any intelligent reader of Milton's verse can see that its beauty depends not solely on the variety, but on the *kind* of variety, in its rhythmical periods. We can hardly hope (nor indeed will many of us care) to subject the whole art of

verse to a thumb-rule analysis, but some of the essential features of this variety are susceptible of easy exposition.

In the first place, while the pauses must be variously placed, the placing must not be *too* varied. The reader must never be allowed to forget that he is reading five-stress verse. As we saw in the first chapter, one of the essential differences between blank verse and prose is that the former is divided into lines; and each line is a series of five rhythmical units. Now unless there is some real value in this division the verse might just as well be printed as prose. Of course the division *is* of value. It is an essential feature of the ideal scheme into which the poet's thought is to be compressed, and with which the thought is in perpetual conflict.

Now Surrey understood perfectly well that the divison was valuable, but he had no conception of the other and larger possibilities of his verse. Every good modern poet allows his rhythmical periods sometimes to coincide with his lines and sometimes to interfere with them. He wants his readers to be vaguely conscious of the perpetual conflict between the two;—as if his thought, which naturally falls into rhythmical periods, whether expressed in prose or in

verse, were always refusing to be wholly subjected to the metrical scheme, but could never escape from it very far.

The most obvious way of suggesting the real subjection of the thought to the scheme, despite its frequent breaking away, is by inserting lines just often enough with pauses at the ends. In the passage above quoted from Milton it will be seen that this is done oftener toward the end than in the first half. In the first half a reader may well feel that the poet is straying rather far from the pentameter standard; but at the close of the quotation he certainly comes back to it with sonorous emphasis.

Milton's general practice in this matter can be fairly shown by figures. I have counted the pauses in three hundred consecutive lines of *Paradise Lost,* and find that rhythmical periods end:

at the ends of lines	161 times;
within the lines	223 times.

On the other hand, in the same three hundred lines it is worth noting that full stops,—that is, the ends of the larger and more independent periods, which we may as well distinguish as rhythmical paragraphs,—occur:

at the ends of lines	37 times;
within the lines	15 times.

Such statistics as these are of course unavailable for exact comparisons, for the estimates are largely subjective. Who may say precisely how many periods are found in a given passage? But these figures are suggestive at least to this extent: they show that while Milton varied his periods most freely, and while he placed his pauses much oftener within his lines than at the ends, yet he had a decided inclination to end his periods with his lines when their final pauses were important and emphatic. His periods generally conflict with his line-structure, but his paragraphs are more apt to come out even with it.

There is another way in which the variation of pauses must be carefully regulated. To illustrate this I have laid impious hands upon our passage from Milton, and altered it as follows:

> Is this the soil, the clime,—said then the lost
> Archangel,—this the region that we must
> Exchange for heaven? this mournful gloom
> for that
> Celestial light? Be it so, since he who now
> Is sovran can dispose and bid what shall

> Be right: farthest from him is best, for him
> Hath force above his equals made supreme.
> Farewell, ye happy fields of heaven, where joy
> Forever dwells! Hail, horrors, hail, and thou
> Infernal world,—profoundest hell,—receive
> Thy new possessor,—one who brings a mind
> Not to be changed by changing place or time.

Here, to be sure, I have departed somewhat too freely from the ideal scheme; but I have not gone enough farther, in this respect, to account for the difference in effect. I have turned the very noblest blank verse into something little better than doggerel, and that with hardly a word altered. Most of the rhythmical periods remain substantially the same, and they still partly agree and partly conflict with the lines. Each single line in the new version is perfectly correct and artistically passable, to say the least. What, then, is the matter?

The whole trouble is with what we may conveniently call the "phrasing"; and the subject of phrasing needs explanation in some detail. It was obviously unwise to break the phrase "the lost archangel" between two lines. Rhythmical *periods* are frequently so broken, and well broken, as we have seen; but within the limits of these periods there are what I shall

call rhythmical *phrases,* consisting of words so intimately associated that they cannot be divorced. When they are so divorced, it seems as if the conflict had virtually ceased, and the very existence of the line-structure been forgotten by the poet. The end of the line, even when the rhythm and sense of the words run past it, is after all a point of importance; we are, or ought to be, conscious that it is a resting place for the rhythm even when the rhythm does not actually rest there; and in consequence, when a word that concludes neither a rhythmical period nor even a rhythmical phrase is placed at the verse-end, it receives a somewhat grotesquely undue prominence.

In good verse, on the other hand, the phrasing,—that is, the arrangement of the rhythmical phrases with reference to the line-structure,—acts as a sort of treasonous ally to the latter in its conflict with the rhythmical periods; for while the periods perpetually struggle to free themselves from the bondage of the line-structure, the phrases, which are the members and sinews of the periods, submit to that bondage almost unreservedly. The trouble with my perversion of Satan's speech is, then, that while my periodic structure and my line-structure are

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

reasonably comparable with the original, I have throughout wrought havoc with the rhythmical phrases, splitting them between lines without care or art. By this means I have fairly delivered the line-structure into the hands of the enemy, and so put an end to the conflict.

It is often by the phrasing of different poets that their styles are most easily discriminated. As an extreme instance (and, be it said in advance, an unfair one) I quote from Byron's "Cain."

> My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
> Than the birds' matins; and my Adah—my
> Own and beloved—she, too, understands not
> The mind that overwhelms me: never till
> Now met I aught to sympathize with me.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Was not he, their father,
> Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
> With me? did we not love each other? and
> In multiplying our being multiply
> Things that will love each other as we love
> Them?

This is assuredly very feeble blank verse; and it is clear that the feebleness is chiefly due to

the very bad phrasing. A slight rearrangement makes it vastly more pleasing.

My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins; and my own beloved,
My Adah, she too understands not half
The mind that overwhelms me: ne'er till now
Met I a soul to sympathize with me.

* * * * * *

Was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb with me, and born
In the same hour? Did we not love each other,
And multiplying our being multiply
Things that will love each other and love us
As we love them?

The quotation is unfair to Byron because it is from one of his dramas, and his dramas were composed upon a false theory of verse. Byron evidently meant to copy his system of phrasing from some of the old dramatists, especially from the later plays of Shakespeare. Now Shakespeare wrote not for the eye but for the ear; and in his latest plays he let his line-structure sink more and more into obscurity. He sometimes gave his dialogues the air of half-metrical prose, rather than of verse,—apparently feeling that verse, as a medium of stage

expression, was too artificial to hold the mirror up to nature. He did not often write bad verse, as Byron did; indeed, the verse of his latest plays is sometimes of his very best; but he set Byron a very bad example. The latter went much farther than Shakespeare had gone, doubtless feeling that he thereby secured freedom and spontaneity. In his non-dramatic verse he never wrote so badly; but while the passages quoted above are therefore not fairly representative, they are passages which could not have been written by a true artist.

For an example of a very different kind of verse I quote from Coleridge's "Nightingale."

> But never elsewhere in one place I knew
> So many nightingales; and far and near,
> In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
> They answer and provoke each other's song,
> With skirmish and capricious passagings,
> And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
> And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
> Stirring the air with such a harmony,
> That should you close your eyes, you might
> almost
> Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
> Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,
> You may perchance behold them on the twigs,

Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright
and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

Here the phrasing is nearly perfect, and the whole effect of the passage shows Coleridge to be one of the real masters of blank verse. Yet his mastery is obviously different from Milton's, and one of the differences is worth examining. I have spoken of the importance of the verse-end as a resting place in the rhythmical series. All poets feel this, but they feel it in varying degrees. Evidently Coleridge felt it more vividly than Milton. His rhythmical periods by no means coincide with his lines, as Surrey's did; but neither do they attain such liberty as Milton's; and Coleridge is much more jealous than the greater poet of the integrity of his rhythmical phrases. Coleridge's verse is rather extreme; but the practice of modern poets in general is nearer to his than to Milton's.

In fact Milton thought less of his phrases than of his periods, and less even of his periods than of those still larger agglomerations of units which I have called rhythmical paragraphs. The individual line was more to him

than to Byron; but as compared with most other poets he seems to have ignored it, and to have fixed his attention on the paragraph's longer swell and flow. From "Farewell, happy fields" to the end of our extract was to him a large rhythmic entity, and he cared more for its cumulative grandeur than for the individual periods and phrases that composed it. There is a passage in *Paradise Lost* in which a hyphenated compound ("wide-encroaching") is actually broken between two lines—to modern ears, most jarringly; but this is obviously due to his strong sense of the organic unity of his rhythmical paragraph.

In my judgment, Milton is still the greatest writer of blank verse, largely because of the sonorous sweep and majesty of these paragraphs; but when I consider his phrasing by itself, I find myself often dissatisfied. Such paragraphing as Milton's and such phrasing as Coleridge's are indeed hardly compatible; but there are many passages in Milton's verse in which one feels that his habit of large utterance has swept him too far.

Such a criticism, however, must be somewhat qualified and hedged in. Milton's versification keeps pace with his style and with his thought.

He is heroic and sublime while Coleridge is domestic and sentimental; and in poetry on the heroic and sublime scale one may well maintain a more turbid rhythm and a more active conflict. Moreover, we must remember that our aesthetic judgments are relative, not absolute. If I, with many of my contemporaries, prefer a rhythm more tranquil than Milton's, this is partly, at least, because we have for two centuries been eagerly cultivating the art of rhymed verse; and rhyme, as subsequent chapters will show, favors tranquillity. There have thus become fixed upon our rhythmic sense habits of which we cannot wholly divest ourselves; or if we do so, by some violent effort or by some caprice of personal prejudice, we cannot be sure that our judicial faculties will keep their poise.

Whether, therefore, Milton's verse does or does not in these respects approach nearest to absolute perfection, no one knows and no one is competent to find out. After all, in the reading of great poetry appreciation is more important than judgment; the latter is only a means to the former, and our wisest endeavor will be to attain a sympathetic comprehension of the rhythmical spirit by which each poet has been

directed. When we read *Paradise Lost* we should surrender ourselves to Milton's paragraph sense; we should try to read with equal fairness the verse of Coleridge and such verse (very beautiful though very different) as that quoted from Shelley near the end of the last chapter; and perhaps on rare occasions we should even try to enjoy the verse of Byron's "Cain." That, however, would be very difficult.

As I look back over the pages of this chapter, I feel that I have given a very inadequate exposition of the greatness of blank verse. A few minor details of its charm will be considered later; but as to its essential principles, unsatisfactory as the foregoing discussion must seem, I think there is nothing that can fitly be added to it in a book of this nature. I have read many more elaborate treatises on metrical law, but the chief result has been a growing conviction of their futility, so far as the aesthetic effectiveness of meter is concerned. The fact is, after all is said, that the great glory of blank verse is not solely in its meter, but jointly in its meter and in its style. If the words are mean, or if the thoughts are mean, majestic and cunningly conflicting cadences will not make blank verse noble or beautiful.

Coleridge improvised a definition of prose as "words in their best order," and of poetry as "the best words in the best order." His antithesis between prose and poetry is more striking than instructive, but in his definition of poetry there is profound truth. When we study meter we are trying to study not the best words in the best order, but only the best order by itself. So far as the principles of meter are concerned, the terrible cry of Satan—"Farewell, happy fields"—might just as well be a dyspeptic's lament over fifteen happy meals. The great poet shows his greatness not by masterly rhythms, but by molding into such rhythms the imaginings of genius fitted with perfect speech; and the several elements of his art are so joined that no man may put them asunder. Elsewhere I may sometime attempt a discussion of the principles of poetry at large; but here my scope is narrower and my results must therefore remain meager.

CHAPTER IV

RHYMED PENTAMETERS

RHYMED verse is easier to write satisfactorily than blank verse, because the ear, when cajoled by rhyme at the ends of the lines, does not demand so high a degree of excellence elsewhere. It is willing to accept something less than the very best words, and something less than the very-best order. Still, the heroic couplet has a rare beauty of its own, and is in its peculiar way susceptible of great variety and charm; and while poets have perhaps succeeded with it oftener than with blank verse, I doubt if so many have succeeded supremely well. The reason for this, however, is partly historical; for in the eighteenth century the couplet was much abused, and so fell into disfavor; and though the art of writing it was rediscovered nearly a hundred years ago, it has never regained its place in popular esteem, and few poets now care to use it.

The most obvious function of rhyme is purely decorative; it pleases the ear by successively arousing and gratifying expectation in new and often beautiful ways. But the most

obvious function is not the most important. Rhyme also serves to emphasize the ends of the lines, and so to make clear the exact verse-length. It displays the metrical structure to the ear, somewhat as the printer's indentions display it to the eye. It is this structural function of rhyme that complicates the art of writing heroic verse, creating both its difficulties and its higher possibilities; while it is chiefly the decorative function that tends to alleviate those difficulties and so to encourage mediocrity.

In blank verse, as we have seen, there is a charm in the perpetual variety of periodic lengths,—in the conflict between the natural rhythmical periods and the artificial limitations of the meter. But if one should write heroic verse upon the same principles, the presence of rhyme would make the total effect utterly illogical. If you want the line-structure to be perpetually threatened with submergence by the flow of the rhythm, why should you hoist a flag on the end of every line? The rhyme in such verse would be really something of an annoyance; for either it would effectually distract your attention from the higher attractions of the rhythm, or else it would itself cease to be

noticed except as an irregular intruder. One or the other of these effects the reader will probably discover in Keats's "Endymion."

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching.

To my own ear this kind of verse would have been equally pleasing, and in many passages more so, if the rhyme had been simply obliterated, somewhat as follows:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will ne'er
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a slumber
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet brooding.

Therefore, on every morrow, do we wreathe
A flowery band to bind us to this world,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy years,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching.

By this alteration the decorative value of the rhyme is lost, to be sure, but we are also freed from its structural embarrassments; and I think that in the original the latter are an offset to the former. As we shall see, this is a criticism to which Keats himself, a year or two later, would probably have assented.

The poets of the "Augustan age" of English literature—Pope and the rest—had some understanding of the difference in principle between heroic and blank verse; but they were even more influenced by the example of French poets and the dogmas of French criticism than they were by aesthetic principles. French heroic verse was written with a somewhat uniform coincidence between metrical lines and rhythmical periods,—for reasons grounded in the nature of the French language,—and English imitators adopted the same style; they placed pauses always at the end of the couplet and

very frequently at the end of the first verse. Thus Pope writes:

> Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
> His soul proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk or milky way.

And thus Goldsmith, a generation later:

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,—
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

These indeed are excellent couplets, while if you should mutilate them as I did those of Keats, you would get detestable blank verse,—something like the Earl of Surrey's. In couplet form, these lines do not utterly betray the monotony of their rhythmical structure, for the varying rhyme makes each couplet different from its predecessor. Moreover, both Pope and Goldsmith were skilled artificers, and within the limitations of the couplet rule they achieved endless variety, as is partly indicated even by the above passages. There is perpetual conflict

between the ideal scheme and the actual expression, in respect to periodic length, tempo, weight of stress, and alternation of syllables; but the conflict is fought out within the stone walls of each individual couplet.

Thus the eighteenth-century couplet illustrates the extreme application of the logic of rhyme. We sometimes call Pope's age the age of prose and reason; and its versification is evidently highly reasonable, whether or not it deserves the stigma of prosiness. Later generations revolted against the spirit of Pope's age, and at the time of our romantic movement its poetry fell into disrepute. It was regarded as dry and rationalistic; and the rigid form of the couplet, becoming identified with the spirit of the poetry, was regarded as necessarily dry and rationalistic too. Poets who sought to discharge in verse their more delicate or ardent emotions demanded a freer scope; and hence, to go back to our former example, the great but immature genius of Keats was misled.

The wholesale condemnation of the old couplet was partly unjust; for the very essence of all verse is artifice in the restriction of natural rhythm, and the real charge against the couplet was merely that it was artificial. More recently

a modicum of justice has been accorded to it, and it is now generally felt that Pope's heroic verse was the very best kind for the sort of poetry that Pope aimed at. Whether you like it in romantic poetry or not, you cannot but acknowledge its excellence for satire, burlesque, or sententious moralizing. How well the sense is brought out by the strong rhyme!

> Nay, fly to altars; there they'll talk you dead,
> For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

And how pointless, in comparison, would be such a romantic rhythm as this:

> Nay, fly to altars; still the same old bore,
> For fools rush in where angels would be more
> Reluctant.

But though thus much justice has been granted to the couplet, I do not feel that the whole truth is yet acknowledged. Couplets are good for epigram, but is that all? Byron, who never quite knew whether he belonged to the former age or to his own, could use them effectively enough in the eighteenth-century fashion, as in that spiteful fling at his mother-in-law:

> Behold the blessings of a lucky lot!
> My play is damned, and Lady Noel not!

But he could also use them superbly in the display of romantic passion, as in the parting of the Corsair and Medora.

She rose, she sprung, she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face:
He dared not raise to his that deep-blue eye,
Which downcast drooped in tearless agony. . . .
Again, again, that form he madly pressed,
Which mutely clasped, imploringly caressed;
And tottering to the couch his bride he bore,
One moment gazed, as if to gaze no more;
Felt that for him earth held but her alone,—
Kissed her cold forehead,—turned:—is Conrad gone?

"And is he gone?" On sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude!
" 'Twas but an instant past, and here he stood!
And now—"; without the portal's porch she rushed,
And then at length her tears in freedom gushed;
Big, bright, and fast, unknown to her they fell,
But still her lips refused to send "Farewell!"
For in that word—that fatal word—howe'er
We promise—hope—believe—there breathes despair.

These verses are somewhat overcharged with rhetorical embellishments, and I am by no

means presenting them as a model; but they nevertheless prove that the stiffest couplet form is adaptable to real poetic uses. Yet though this form was really good, there are other styles that are still better; and it was the ultra-romantic Keats that developed the best of them all. Keats himself was abundantly dissatisfied with "Endymion," and devoted himself to the study of Dryden, one of the great old masters of the couplet. The result, when he again essayed heroic verse in "Lamia," was an entirely new kind of cadence.

> As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
> Throughout her palaces imperial,
> And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
> Muttered, like tempest in the distance brewed,
> To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
> Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,
> Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
> Companioned or alone; while many a light
> Flared here and there from wealthy festivals,
> And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
> Or found them clustered in the corniced shade
> Of some arched temple door or dusky colonnade.

This kind of verse is obviously composed upon principles already familiar. Much that I

have said of blank verse might be verbally repeated here, with the single change of the word line to couplet. For example, the poet does not pause at the end of each couplet; but on the other hand he must never forget that couplets are what he is really writing. There is real value in the couplet-structure in "Lamia,"—as there was not in "Endymion,"—for it marks the boundaries of the ideal scheme into which the poet's thought is to be compressed, and with which the thought is in perpetual conflict. The rhythmical periods are always trying to free themselves from the bondage of the couplet-structure, but never succeeding; and the end of each couplet, even when rhythm and sense run past it, is still present to our consciousness as a point of theoretical rest.

In short, we have here the same old conflict, though with modifications. The line-structure is reinforced by the couplet-structure, and thus the grip on the rhythm is tightened; but the conflict is still present, and affords a continuing interest to the reader's ear. All that a poet knows or instinctively feels about the art of blank verse he can put in practice in heroic verse—with the proper allowances. He will find satisfaction not only in phrases and periods

but also in the longer rhythmical paragraph, as Milton did; and his paragraphs will gain charm from their varying relations to the couplet-structure. In the passage from "Lamia," for instance, the reader will instinctively be aware of a certain difference between the first paragraph, which begins with one couplet and ends in the middle of another, and the second paragraph, which begins in the middle of a couplet and ends in the middle of a line or at the end of a couplet,—whichever you please. (I am using the term paragraph, like many other terms, to illustrate important principles; but I do not claim for it mathematical precision.)

An irregularity is noticeable at the end of our last extract: it ends with an Alexandrine,—a verse of six stresses. Alexandrines were commonly used by many of the heroic writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and when the couplet was kept pretty rigid it may have seemed a welcome variation. There are many instances of its effective use, though in the "Lamia" passage I think it might better have been cut down. It affords variety, certainly; but the question is whether the variety is needed; whether, indeed, the poet's art has not a purer and better effect when it plays only within the

limits of the fixed form. But this is the whole question between two schools of poetry and criticism, and is not only too large for our present scope but probably incapable of definitive settlement anywhere. I have no right to say more than this: that the kind of pleasure which I myself receive from the best couplets is generally hindered rather than heightened by the occasional Alexandrine.

This same diffidence becomes us well whenever we make any assertions about the various schools of versification. I have expressed my opinions somewhat dogmatically, perhaps, about Keats, Pope, and others; but I make no pretense of authority; indeed, I deny that any individual, or any generation, can be an authority in such matters. A keener sensitiveness than my own to the decorative beauty of rhyme, or perhaps a less docile regard for its structural function, would make a reader take greater delight in "Endymion" than I can take. In judging of the various styles of the real masters of heroic verse,—in judging the couplets of "Lamia," *The Canterbury Tales,* the Satires of Dryden, or Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini,*— critics will always differ, according as their sympathies are with one side or the other in the

conflict. But though we may not safely say just how the conflict should be conducted, we may be very positive in asserting that it is the conflict that makes the verse good; and I myself, though I concede that the best blank verse is finer than the best possible couplets, nevertheless look upon the latter as a very subtle and beautiful medium of poetic expression.

We now leave the couplet, and will consider the effect of rhyme in more complex combinations. In all stanza-forms rhyme still performs its two functions, one decorative and the other structural; and the latter function must now be examined somewhat more attentively. Rhyme marks the ends of the lines, and so not only emphasizes the line-structure but also marks (we may almost say makes) the structure of the stanza.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
  The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
  And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
  And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
  And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.

These stanzas are rhythmical paragraphs made up of four similar rhythmical periods. Each period has its own interior rhythm, marked by five stresses separated by equal intervals of time; but the periods themselves are grouped together in the larger rhythm of the stanza, and the rhyme displays their grouping.

The elementary principles of the stanza may best be exhibited by experimental variations. Suppose, for instance, that Gray had arranged the lines of his elegy in couplets, as follows:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way;
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.

These are not very good couplets. Not only are they rigidly separated by final pauses, but each couplet is rigid in its internal structure; for each line is a separate period and each period (with a few exceptions) is a rigid succession of five strong stresses. Yet the poem as Gray wrote it is perhaps the best loved poem

in our language, and no one doubts that it deserves our affection.

The explanation is simple. We saw at the beginning of this chapter that rhyme in heroic couplets beguiles the ear and partly obviates the necessity of subtle variations in the rhythm. Still more, as we now see, does the stanzaic rhythm, reinforced by stanzaic rhyme, afford a sufficing charm of its own. Indeed, we are tempted for the present to go even farther than this: for as in the couplet the freedom of blank verse would be positively irksome (*teste* "Endymion"), so here the larger rhythm of the stanza seems to reject even such freedom as the couplet demands. The couplet is very short; its ideal scheme is easily carried by the ear, and we relish the conflict between the scheme and the actual periods; but Gray's stanza is longer, and in proportion to its length and complexity its ideal scheme makes a greater demand on the carrying power of the ear. Hence the ideal scheme is allowed to enforce its authority over the rhythmical periods more autocratically.

Let us try another experiment.

The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight.

The effect of this arrangement is still pleasing, —perhaps almost as pleasing as the original,— but it is very different. The rhyme does not so vividly display the rhythm of the stanza; it rather slightly obscures and blunts it; for the lines which our ears paired together in the original rhythmical scheme,—the first and third, and the second and fourth,—are now not paired by the rhyme, but divorced. A pleasing stanzaic rhythm is present, but there is less sing-song emphasis upon it. Now in all stanza-forms the rhyme plays its part in one or the other of these two ways, and often in both; that is, it displays the stanzaic structure, or it obscures it, or it partly displays and partly obscures it. In general, simple display is more popular; for in stanzas the sing-song effect is rather agreeable than otherwise. We have seen that a consistent regularity in couplets is better than a consistent regularity in single lines; and so, when we write not couplets but comparatively large groups of lines, regularity be-

comes a desideratum, and we like to have it brought forcibly to our attention.

The general principles that govern stanzas made of heroic lines are indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, but one of the inferences drawn from Gray's stanza was only provisional, and needs considerable modification. Of stanzas in general it is not true that internal rigidity is essential. The fairly regular coincidence of line with rhythmical period which we find in the "Elegy" is due to Gray's individual taste,—a taste formed in the days of the rigid couplet; and the same stanza-form admits of considerable variation. Thus Wordsworth writes:

Ah then if mine had been the painter's hand
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream;

and William Watson (in a stanza referring to Burns, Wordsworth, and Coleridge) goes even farther in breaking up the rhythm:

Bright was his going forth, but clouds ere long
Whelmed him; in gloom his radiance set, and those
Twin morning stars of the new century's song,
Those morning stars that sang together, rose.

These stanzas have a charm wholly distinct from that of Gray's "Elegy," and we may legitimately prefer either one or the other, according to our varying moods. I think, however, that most readers, in most kinds of poetry, will find greater satisfaction when the ideal scheme and the actual measures are to some extent in conflict; and that in Mr. Watson's beautiful poem ("Wordsworth's Grave") even so extreme an example as the stanza last quoted is a delightful variation. But in general we certainly do not want as much freedom of conflict in the stanza as we demand in the couplet. The end of a stanza, especially, is almost always marked by a substantial pause.

For one more illustration of the same subject I quote the first stanzas of *The Faerie Queene* and Shelley's "Adonais."

A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
The cruel marks of many a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield;
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield;
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers
And teach them thine own sorrow; say, with me
Died Adonais; till the future dares
Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity.

Shelley's treatment of this form—the Spenserian stanza—suggests more of the poet's fine frenzy than Spenser's own. Here, again, I myself take more pleasure in the freer treatment; but I also feel that in a stanza of this length it is somewhat perilous. A long and complicated stanza, while it has the great advantage of affording more opportunity for variety, is much more difficult to carry in the head; and when the form is not distinctly emphasized by rhythm as well as rhyme, it will be lost upon untrained ears, or upon ears that lack the carrying power. Many persons, I am convinced, read "Adonais" with very little perception of its stanzaic structure; and such persons are quite right in saying that for them the liberty of the conflict is carried too far. Others again, with no such defect of ear, may on grounds of taste

prefer a stricter adherence to the Spenserian scheme; and with such persons it would be impertinent for me to argue.

The most widely cultivated stanza-form is that of the Italian sonnet. The term sonnet was formerly applied to various kinds of lyrics and ballads without reference to their form, and it is still used of two widely different types of composition, the Italian or Miltonic sonnet, and the Elizabethan or Shakespearean. These are alike in hardly any respect except that each is a stanzaic group of fourteen lines. The Elizabethan sonnet is so simple in structure that it needs no special comment here, but the Italian, which has somewhat unjustly ousted the other from critical favor, is a peculiarly interesting illustration of our principles.

The Italian sonnet consists of two parts, an octave (of eight lines) and a sestet (of six lines). The lines of the octave rhyme in the order *abbaabba*—occasional departures from the order being so rare as to be negligible. The rhymes in the sestet are arranged in various ways, but are always different from those of the octave. Among the common schemes are *cdecde, ccdeed, cdcdcd*. A sonnet from Rossetti's *House*

of Life, entitled "Lovesight," will illustrate the form.

When do I see the most, beloved one?
  When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
  Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)
  Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
  Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! If I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
  Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
  The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

In this sonnet a difference in tone is to be noted between the octave and the sestet. The lines that belong to the first rhyme-system express the first part of the poet's thought, and the lines of the second rhyme-system express the second. At precisely the end of the eighth line the reader feels that he has reached the end of something like a stanza within a stanza. It is nowadays the usual practice to break sonnets

in this manner, and there are two obvious reasons of common sense for so doing. First, if the rhyme-scheme does not bear some such close relation to the sense, it seems meaningless. Second, it is only by breaking up the sonnet into two parts that the reader can be enabled easily to grasp its form. A sonnet is too long and complicated to be felt as a stanza; but an octave, running upon only two rhymes and always arranged in the same way, is easily comprehended, while a sestet, being shorter still, may be varied with some freedom and yet be perfectly intelligible. Rossetti always pauses at the end of his octave, and consequently the reader of his sonnets is always pleasantly conscious of their form; but when sonnets are divided at haphazard, according to any poet's convenience or caprice, their form does not impress itself at all at first reading, and even upon re-reading it may seem to lack justification. Compare with Rossetti's "Lovesight" the following—one of Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

"My future will not copy my fair past"—
I wrote that once; and thinking at my side
My ministering life-angel justified
The word by his appealing look upcast

To the white throne of God, I turned at last,
And there, instead, saw thee, not unallied
To angels in thy soul! Then I, long tried
By natural ills, received the comfort fast,

While budding, at thy sight, my pilgrim's staff
Gave out green leaves with morning dews impearled.
I seek no copy now of life's first half:
Leave here the pages with long musing curled,
And write me new my future's epigraph,
New angel mine, unhoped for in the world!

Yet there is another side of the question. Some poets have felt that the sonnet-form, as explained above, is too rigid and mechanical, and have treated it as Keats treated the couplet. The form of the sonnet just quoted is roughly comparable, in principle, with the couplet-form in "Endymion," and I think every one will agree that it is too loose; but a sort of "Lamia"-form has been used often and with great success. Wordsworth, most notably, was very fond of breaking the thought and the rhythmic continuity of his sonnets not exactly at the end of the octave, but perhaps just before or just after it. Here is a familiar specimen of his workmanship—a sonnet on the sonnet.

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,

Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom

Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

Why is not this really better than Rossetti's kind? Why does it not give us a higher pleasure, by suggesting a conflict between the thought and the sonnet-form? The ideal scheme prescribes an octave and a sestet, and the thought is forced into the mold, but refuses to submit to an exact fit, exactly as it does in the couplets of "Lamia"; and I think we can perceive a beauty in the very freedom of the Wordsworthian movement which Rossetti's sonnets lack. Nevertheless I prefer Rossetti's

strictness, and regard Rossetti as our greatest master of the sonnet-form. My ear cannot grasp octaves and sestets as readily as it can grasp couplets, and it therefore is better pleased when their integrity is preserved and emphasized; and octaves and sestets, as compared with couplets, offer so much more freedom within their own limits that I feel no need of variation in the limits themselves.

Contemporary opinion seems to be mainly on the same side; but those who prefer the remoter charm of the Wordsworthian form are perhaps the happy possessors of more retentive ears than ours; and in any case I do not see how we can safely pronounce their taste inferior. The critical reader may fancy that I myself am not wholly consistent, for it might not be easy to reconcile these remarks with what I have said above about the Spenserian stanza. If there is any inconsistency here I do not apologize for it; but I recognize that it behooves me to be cautious in criticizing others.

CHAPTER V

MISCELLANEOUS METERS

THE superiority of the iambic pentameter has been partly explained already. It is unsymmetrical, and therefore admits of freer division and more variety than lines of four stresses, or of six. The line of three stresses is equally unsymmetrical, but is too short to admit much variety of treatment. This is partly a mere matter of mathematics, since six syllables obviously cannot be arranged in as many ways as ten; but it is also to be observed that the shortness of the line restricts the operation of the law of conflict. The ends of the lines come so near together that the line-structure is forcibly emphasized and becomes the dominant feature of the rhythm; it is impracticable for the rhythmical periods to gain their independence. Poets feel this instinctively, and when they write verse of three stresses they make no effort to treat it as they treat blank verse; they let the conflict between the line-structure and the rhythmical periods almost disappear, and rely almost wholly on their other resources. Perhaps the most familiar example of this verse is in Tennyson's "Maud."

O, let the solid ground
  Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
  What some have found so sweet!
Then let come what come may,
  What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

The same thought might be expressed in blank verse somewhat as follows:

O let the solid ground not fail beneath me,
Before my life has found what some have found
So passing sweet! Then let come what come will,
Though I go mad, I shall have had my day.

This transformation brings gain as well as loss. By smoothing out the jerkiness of the line-structure we have given to the first sentence a new kind of dignity and force; and the last words of the sentence, by their isolated position as a detached rhythmical phrase, have received a pleasing kind of emphasis which is almost wholly foreign to the shorter meter. On the other hand, we have lost the sing-song simplicity of the original, and all the charm of the rhyme, both structural and decorative; and

there was in Tennyson's stanza a striking effectiveness in the very shortness of the lines,—in the emphasis that came from the crisp reiteration of the rhythm,—which is foreign to blank verse.

The reader will see that the short meter is essentially lyrical. It is well suited to the simple expression of a simple feeling. In songs that are actually sung everyone knows that subtle complexities of expression are ineffective; and so in those poems that we still call lyrics,—even though nowadays the lyrist carries no lyre,—a song-like meter, accompanied with rhyme and arranged in stanza-form, accords best with the straightforwardness of simple passion. If Tennyson had wished in this part of his poem to express subtler delicacies of feeling, or if he had wished for more stateliness and dignity of utterance, he might have chosen blank verse. If, on the other hand, he had been writing blank verse, he would probably not have written any such lines as I have given above. His conception would have been likely to clothe itself spontaneously in more stately language, and to follow more intricate byways of feeling rather than the straight highway. His hero might then

have expressed himself somewhat as King Arthur did, under stress of a similar emotion:

> What happiness to reign a lonely king,
> Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,
> O earth that soundest hollow under me,—
> Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be joined
> To her that is the fairest under heaven,
> I seem as nothing, . . .

This perhaps sounds a trifle artificial, detached from its context; but when we read it as part of the whole *Idyll* we are keyed up in advance to the level of blank verse, and it sounds dignified and natural; and it is clear that its effectiveness would be ruined if the thought were cut up into lines of six syllables each.

The three-stress line, then, though unsymmetrical, derives no great advantage from its lack of symmetry; and it clearly has no right to share the name "heroic." The seven-stress line is also unsymmetrical, and it might seem that it should afford even better scope to the poet's art than the line of five stresses; but a brief inspection will show that it does not. I quote from a well-known stanza of Byron's:

Oh could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have
been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a
vanished scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish
though they be,
So, midst the withered waste of life, those tears
would flow to me.

As we follow this rhythm we instinctively feel a division in each line after the fourth stress, and, though the two periods into which the line is thus broken are apparently unequal, we in fact equalize them by an involuntary pause at the verse-end.

Now it is obviously not necessary to make this equal division. There is, indeed, one line in Byron's poem which is differently divided:

'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone,
which fades so fast;

but there is only one such. The fact is simply that the meter is too long to be conveniently accepted by the ear as a unit; we cannot comfortably carry it in our heads, and therefore the poets break it up for us. For the same reason, they almost always break it up in one particular way. If they treated it as they treat the heroic

line, putting pauses here, there, and everywhere,—sometimes letting the periods overrun the lines and sometimes not,—they would indeed find large scope for the art of variety; but there would be none of the pleasure of the conflict, for the line-structure would be too weak to assert itself in our rhythmical consciousness. In very short meters the rhythmical periods surrender to the line-structure because it is useless for them to struggle against it; in long ones they surrender out of magnanimity to a helpless antagonist; but in neither case can there be much conflict between the two. The single specimen quoted above from Byron's poem shows fairly well the extent to which the conflict can be carried in seven-stress verse,—though of course more extreme examples might be quoted; and the reader will readily see, without further demonstration, that the longer meters, like the shorter, are lyric rather than epic in character.

It should now be easy to see why the name blank verse has been so completely monopolized by the decasyllabic meter. No other form of rhymeless verse has ever won a high enough place to challenge the title; and the reason for

this may be shown by a simple illustration. I take a passage from Whittier's "Snowbound," a poem written in rhymed octosyllabics, and I obliterate the rhyme as I did once before in a passage from Keats.

What matter how the wind behaved?
What matter how the north-wind stormed?
Not all the wind-swept sheets of rain
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
O Time and Change! with hair as white
As was my sire's that winter day,
How strange it seems, with so much lost
Of life and love, to still live on!
Ah brother, only you and I
Are left of all that circle now,—
The dear home faces whereupon
The fitful firelight paled and gleamed.

There is certainly nothing very bad about this; but compare the original:

What matter how the wind behaved?
What matter how the north-wind raved?
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
O Time and Change! with hair as gray
As was my sire's that winter day,
How strange it seems, with so much gone
Of life and love, to still live on!

Ah brother, only I and thou
Are left of all that circle now,—
The dear home faces whereupon
The fitful firelight paled and shone.

Clearly, whatever we think of my version of this passage, the original is better. The meter needs rhyme. The addition of rhyme is a net gain to the extent of rhyme's whole value, both decorative and structural. Of decasyllabic verse this cannot be said, for the structural function of the rhyme restricts the freedom of the rhythm; but in octosyllabics there is no such freedom to be restricted. Rhymeless octosyllabics hardly admit greater variety than can be practiced *with* rhyme, for the sing-song tendency of the metrical scheme is sufficient to hold its own, with the help of rhyme, against any ordinary degree of license in the rhythmical periods. Moreover, rhyme is actually needed to differentiate the lines. My version of Whittier's lines may be fairly agreeable in itself, but if it were protracted over several pages it would become very wearisome.

The same need of rhyme is found in all the shorter meters, and also in the longer ones, since the latter either tend to split up into short

ones or else by their length lose distinctness of form. In either case they may be agreeable without rhyme, but they are pretty certain to be more so with it. Some poets have attempted rhymeless lines of unequal lengths, finding in the very formlessness of their verse a romantic gratification. One of Henley's experiments will serve for the type.

Once on a time
There was a little boy: a master-mage
By virtue of a Book
Of magic—O, so magical it filled
His life with visionary pomps
Processional! And Powers
Passed with him where he passed. And Thrones
And Dominations, glaived and plumed and mailed,
Thronged in the criss-cross streets, . . .

Verse of this kind has been so favored in the last decade or two that one who condemns it must speak with some diffidence; but I myself can see little value in it. There is no pleasure in the successive gratification and disappointment of the reader's expectation, for the reader is not encouraged to form any expectations whatever; there is no conflict between the rhythm and the metrical scheme, for there is no

metrical scheme. Mr. Henley wanted to revel in artistic freedom from restraint; but he forgot that unless the restraint is visible in the background the freedom will hardly be recognizable as such, and therefore will not be artistically effective. Milton might just as well have printed Satan's speech in this way:

> Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,—
> Said then the lost archangel,—
> Is this the seat that we must change
> For heaven? this mournful gloom for that
> Celestial light?

The fact is that within the limits of a fixed form there is ample scope for freedom, and to reject form altogether generally suggests artistic decadence rather than strength.

Thus far I have mentioned no meters except those commonly called iambic,—those, namely, whose scheme demands regular successions of stressed and unstressed syllables, beginning with the latter and ending with the former. Partly opposite in theory, and differing in effect to a remarkable degree, are the meters called trochaic. The most familiar example is perhaps Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.

And the smoke rose slowly, slowly,
Through the tranquil air of morning,
First a single line of darkness,
Then a denser, bluer vapor,
Then a snow-white cloud unfolding,
Like the tree-tops of the forest,
Ever rising, rising, rising,
Till it touched the top of heaven,
Till it broke against the heaven,
And rolled outward all around it.

Trochaic meters are not in high favor in English. Everyone feels their inferiority, and they are seldom used in compositions of length and dignity.

This fact is commonly explained as follows. In trochaic meters it is thought that we in our minds commonly associate each light syllable with the stressed syllable immediately preceding, while in iambics each light syllable is associated with the one following; in other words, trochaic meters are regarded as made up of trochees and iambic meters as made of iambi. Now in English most dissyllabic words are accented on the first syllable. Consequently, when such words occur in trochaic verse, the tendency of the rhythm is commonly to bind their two syllables together and to separate them

from the context; while in iambic meters the tendency is to bind such words to the context as intimately as their two syllables are bound together. The resulting fluency is thought to account for the smoother charm of iambics as opposed to the choppiness of trochaics. The difference may be clearly shown by making the necessary changes in the passage quoted.

> And slowly, slowly, rose the smoke,
> Through morning's still and tranquil air,
> A single line of darkness first,
> A denser, bluer vapor next,
> And then a snow-white opening cloud.

Certainly this rhythm is more agreeable to our ears than the trochaic; the latter does, after a time, become exasperating; and the foregoing explanation seems plausible. I myself have given it elsewhere as the true one, but I am now inclined to doubt its soundness. One reason for my doubt is that, if the explanation were correct, iambic verses ought to be similarly choppy and unpleasing when their dissyllabic words happen to be oxytones; but I cannot discover that they are. Such a line as Milton's

> Restore us and regain the blissful seat

seems to me as fluent as the line which follows it:

Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top.

In the following passage I have deliberately put together as many oxytones as I conveniently could, and excluded paroxytones altogether—regardless, of course, of sense, and with the sole purpose of trying a metrical experiment.

Each star that shines aloft in the blue vault,
Aloof, remote, by blank bare deeps disjoined
From its compeers, throbs yet in full accord
With their sweet hymn of praise,—if we concede,
As bards assure us, that the stars do sing.
So when a shy recluse forswears the world,
Secludes himself in some far-off retreat,
Assumes strange clothes, and then repeats long
prayers,
Does he suppose himself quite set apart
From all mankind? As well might man presume
To make repeal of God's divine decrees.

Without pretending that this verse has any merit whatever, I venture to affirm that it suffers very little from the cause in question. To my ear, the fact that the passage contains twenty-four oxytones and no paroxytones may, perhaps, give it some stiffness of cadence which

might better be varied; but I can detect no effect even remotely resembling the choppiness of *Hiawatha*.

I am therefore inclined to ascribe our low estimate of trochaic meters not to any peculiarity of our language, but to an innate dislike for the trochaic rhythm itself. I think the rhythm of "Hollow, hollow, hollow, hollow" is intrinsically less agreeable to our senses than the rhythm of "Hello! hello! hello! hello!" and the reason why it is less agreeable seems to be that it is less easy. In the latter rhythm, a low tone leads up gradually to a full stress, while in the other there is a sudden initial explosion, conveying a sense of effort and difficulty. As we saw in the first chapter, our whole instinct for rhythm is based on a principle of economy; and it is natural that those rhythms should please us best in which there seems to be least effort. Meter is the natural rhythm of speech subjected to certain restraints; but in trochaic meters the rhythm that is put under restraint has just a touch of the unnatural and odd.

Trochaic meters are generally relegated to a subordinate place. There are a few charming lyrics, but the slight unnaturalness and oddity of their rhythm is noticeable—being indeed a

part of their charm. Even *Hiawatha* is, I think, delightful, just because its meter gives it the right touch of primitive outlandishness; but I confess I cannot enjoy very much of it at a time. Browning's "One Word More" is rhythmically grotesque; but the careful reader of that poem will find in its curious train of thought some justification for its grotesque form. In general, however, we cannot condemn the instinct which has led poets to prefer iambic verse for sustained and dignified composition.

Where the trochaic rhythm is used, it is very often used in an impure form, the verse both beginning and ending with stressed syllables. Thus in Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" we have

> Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn.

In such a poem we sometimes hardly know whether the rhythm is iambic or trochaic. If the mid-line break comes after a stressed syllable, as in

> Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might,

the verse seems to acquire a decidedly iambic

run. Such meters are in fact compromises, and they partly succeed in combining the odd charm of the trochaic rhythm with the natural ease of the iambic.

As a further reason for the inferior standing of trochaic meters, it should be observed that they do not admit as much variety as iambic meters. Inversions are rare, partly because they are harder to manage. We saw in the second chapter that they are easy at the beginning of a line in iambics, but less natural elsewhere; and the reason was that in the middle of a line they bring together two stressed syllables. They obviously must have this effect in trochaic meters even at the beginning of a line. In "Locksley Hall" we encounter no inversions of any sort until we reach the twenty-sixth verse. Hence, of course, the persistent monotony of the meter.

Moreover, trochaic meters do not admit much freedom of conflict between the periods and the scheme of the line-structure. Browning, for example, in "One Word More" has made no attempt to introduce such a conflict, though the poem is in rhymeless five-stress verse, and though in his iambic blank verse Browning has shown himself a master. In the

following passage for instance, the line-structure is undisturbed.

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute.

This monotonous treatment seems so inevitable that no other, so far as I remember, has ever been extensively tried. In the four-stress verse of *Hiawatha* the same monotony is found.

The reason for these facts is not obvious at first sight. Why could not an agreeable trochaic blank verse be written in some such manner as the following?

And the smoke rose slowly through the tranquil
Air of morning, first a line of darkness,
Rising single, then a vapor growing
Ever denser, denser, then unfolding
In a snow-white fleecy cloud, like tree-tops
In the forest, till it touched high heaven.

I think the reason may be that, with our innate preference for iambic rhythms, we find ourselves in such verse as this unconsciously going over to the iambic scheme; we refuse to carry

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

the trochaic scheme in our heads unless it is forcibly brought to our attention at the end of each line. We find ourselves trying to make out of it something like this:

The smoke rose slowly through the tranquil air
Of morning, first a line of darkness, rising single, then
A vapor growing ever denser, denser, then
Unfolding in a snow-white fleecy cloud.

We fail to accept the trochaic scheme, and the iambic scheme fails to work; and consequently we remain baffled and bewildered.

This consideration reveals, I think, another reason for the infrequency of inversions in trochaics. The meter must be kept fairly regular and pure, or its real character will not be apparent. Iambic verse can be treated with much license, as we have seen, for our strong leaning to the iambic rhythm enables us still to feel its fundamental unity; but trochaic meters must be monotonously uniform, for unless the rhythm of the words follows pretty closely the ideal scheme the latter becomes hopelessly submerged.

There still remain for consideration several

classes of meters in which stressed and unstressed syllables do not regularly alternate. In the meter of Byron's lyric

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold

there are regularly two light syllables for each strong stress. Every "foot" is an anapaest. This galloping verse, however, is generally made more agreeable by frequent omissions of a light syllable—in common parlance, by substitution of iambi for anapaests. So in "The Burial of Sir John Moore":

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

In the third line of the stanza there are only ten syllables, instead of twelve, for the four stresses; but of course the rhythmic intervals are felt to be equivalent. We read the line almost as slowly as we should if it were "Not a soldier discharging his fare-thee-well shot"; but we have to eke out the rhythm by slight prolongations of certain syllables, or by slight pauses. In the first line of the extract most readers will lengthen the word "drum" and also

make a slight pause after it, so that the intervals are as long as they would be with the word "trumpet" substituted.

The intervals in this rhythm are of course approximately equal to one another, but the reader will readily perceive that they are longer (normally) than the intervals in iambic verse. In the iambic line

The soldier fired his farewell shot

I think few would pronounce the last two words quite as deliberately as in the stanza quoted above. The tempo of all verse varies capriciously, as we saw in the first chapter; but the average tempo of the verse now under consideration is slower than the average tempo of iambic verse. On the other hand, we ordinarily pronounce the actual syllables in these slow rhythms somewhat more rapidly than in iambics. That is to say, we allow less time, on the average, for each syllable; but, as there are many more syllables to be pronounced, we allow somewhat more time for the average interval. Thus it would be quite correct to describe these meters either as slower or as faster than iambics, according as we think of the rhythmical scheme or of the language. Upon these

seemingly trivial facts rest most of the principles that apply peculiarly to this kind of verse.

The first thing to be noted is that these freer meters admit less variety in the strength of the stresses. Observe that in the whole first stanza of Shelley's poem, "The Cloud," there is not one of those so-called "conventional stresses" that we found so common in iambic verse.

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

In the whole poem of eighty-four lines there are, indeed, only two or three weak stresses. The most unmistakable one occurs in this passage:

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky.

The chief reason why such stresses are rare is found in the length of the rhythmic interval. As the beats are farther apart they need to be stronger; it is not quite satisfactory merely to imagine them, as we so often do in iambics. In Pope's line

The proper study of mankind is man

one hardly stresses the word "of" at all; as was explained in the second chapter, it need only be pronounced at the proper time; but in the last line quoted from "The Cloud" I find myself giving a perceptible stress to the same little word, because the general rhythm of the poem has made such a stress imperative. Moreover, as the double interval between "nurs—" and "sky" is considerably longer than the corresponding interval in Pope's line, it is easier to eke it out with an unnatural stress than to give a slow and measured utterance to unimportant words without stressing them.

In other poems, such as "The Sensitive Plant," Shelley allows himself somewhat more freedom, and occasionally a line with a weak stress may be very beautiful; but even in "The Sensitive Plant" weak stresses are exceptional and rare, and most skilful poets favor them

even less than Shelley did. There is a minor reason for avoiding them in the fact that they sometimes are misleading; for where the number of syllables varies capriciously the reader needs a strong word to catch his eye and signal the proper place for the rhythmical beat. Verses ought of course to read themselves; and everyone knows how vexatious they are when they do not.

Finally, there is still a third minor reason for the rarity of weak stresses. It is found in the accentual character of our language, and the rhythmic instinct explained in the first chapter. There is little likelihood, in ordinary composition, of one's putting together five syllables that are incapable of receiving a natural speech-stress. In iambic verse only three weak syllables need come together to necessitate a weak stress. There are, indeed, only three in the particular anapaestic line last quoted from Shelley; but it is obvious that such combinations are easily avoidable in anapaestic verse.

The strengthened beat upon the stressed syllables seems to fortify the scheme of the line-structure, and so prevent much freedom of conflict on the part of the rhythmical periods. This is especially true, of course, of rhymed

verse. There is so much emphasis on the rhyme that a rhythmical period broken between two lines has almost the same effect as a broken phrase in iambic verse. Browning writes, in "Saul":

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep
Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky.

These lines show a praiseworthy struggle for freedom and variety; but is the struggle worth while? The words "when round me the sheep fed in silence" protest vehemently against disjunction; and so do the words "the world that might lie 'neath his ken." In iambic verse this phrasing would be unobjectionable. Compare

And fancies then grew rife
Which came long since, when in the fields the sheep
Fed silently.

If rhyme were not present this breaking of the periods would seem less violent, but it would

still not be pleasant; and this, of course, is one reason why these meters are generally used with rhyme. Most of them need rhyme, just as short iambic meters do, because they are not easily susceptible of that peculiar treatment which makes blank verse better than heroic verse.

Such are the principal effects of the slowness of these rhythms. The quickness of their syllabic movement, on the other hand, necessitates a peculiar delicacy of diction. This, however, is a matter of practical technique rather than of theory. I need only point out that the charm of these meters depends largely upon the kind of syllables chosen to fill the unstressed places in the rhythm. These syllables may be long and heavy, or they may be short and light; but unless they accord in character with the stressed syllables, with the rhetorical emphasis of the sentences, and with the feeling expressed, the total effect cannot be harmonious. To illustrate the extremes of art one may well compare the passage already given from "The Cloud" with the following stanza from Browning's "Abt Vogler," in which one of the most beautiful conceptions of a great poet is marred by almost every possible awkwardness of versification.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good
shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor
good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for
the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth
too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in
the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once; we shall hear it by
and by.

Because of their rapid syllabic movement and the slow strong beat of their rhythm these meters are ill-adapted to the expression of intricate feeling or close thought. Like some of the more sing-song iambic meters, they are lyrical in their essential character. So much of our attention is monopolized by the tune, as we read them, that we have none to spare for the unraveling of tangled meanings. Such a poem as Browning's "Saul," in which the expression is often obscure and difficult, is made still more difficult by the distraction of its galloping rhythm; the obscurities are thereby made worse

than difficult, they are made exasperating; and the only way to read the poem intelligently is to forget the rhythm and try to read it as if it were prose. No one can fully appreciate at the same time both the rhythm and the sense of "Saul"; we either relish the verse with only a vague sense of the meaning, or else become absorbed in the meaning with only a vague sense of the verse.

A similar effect is produced by much of Swinburne's poetry; for though Swinburne is the greatest living master of these forms of verse, he has achieved his mastery largely by sacrificing clearness and precision of style to sensuous charm of sound. It is safe to predict that anyone who reads the opening lines of "Hesperia" for the first time will find them rhythmically charming, but will have little more understanding of them than of the beautiful nonsense verses of Lear or Lewis Carroll.

Out of the golden remote wild west where the sea without shore is,
Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all, with the fulness of joy,
As a wind sets in with the autumn that blows from the region of stories,
Blows with a perfume of songs and of memories beloved from a boy,

Blows from the capes of the past oversea to the
bays of the present,
Filled as with shadow of sound with the pulse of
invisible feet,
Far out to the shallows and straits of the future, by
rough ways or pleasant,
Is it thither the wind's wings beat? Is it hither to
me, O my sweet?

Many other kinds of verse are familiar to English readers, but they differ from those already considered only in the manner of applying the same fundamental principles. Sometimes more than two light syllables occur between stresses. In Swinburne's "Super Flumina Babylonis" there are in one part of the verse four successive unstressed syllables.

By the wáters of Bábylon we sat dówn and wépt,
Remembering thee,
That for áges of ágony hast endúred and slépt;

and the experiment is as beautiful as it is interesting. Jean Ingelow, in a lyric beginning "Like a laverock in the lift," frequently puts no light syllable at all between the stresses:

When the darker days come, and no sun will shine,
Thou shalt dry my tears, lass, and I'll dry thine.

It's we two, it's we two, while the world's away,
Sitting by the golden sheaves on our wedding day.

And, finally, Rudyard Kipling, in "The Last Chantey," occasionally even omits a stressed syllable and actually lets the beat of the rhythm fall upon nothing at all but a pause.

Sún, wínd, and cloúd ′ shall faíl not fróm the
fáce of it,
Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the fulmar flying
free;
And the ships shall go abroad
To the glory of the Lord
Who heard the silly sailor-folk and gave them back
their sea.

Such effects as these are often very pleasing indeed, but it is evident that their availability is restricted. They need no extended analysis, for they are self-explanatory.

All the meters considered in this chapter are susceptible of scansion by feet, like that discussed in Chapter II; but here, as there, it seems idle to insist upon any defined system. Such verse as that of Swinburne's "Hesperia"

may be called either dactylic or anapaestic, and may be divided in either of these two ways:

Out of the/golden re/mote wild/west where the/sea without/shore is,

or

Out/of the gold/en remote/wild west/where the sea/without shore/is.

Our choice between the two will depend upon whether the poem as a whole seems to move dactylically or anapaestically. The first line looks dactylic, but the second line might be either, and the last line of my extract looks very anapaestic. Really the only important facts to notice are that neither scansion is more than a convenient mode of description, since neither shows the natural lines of cleavage in the rhythmical movement, and that though we seem to find in the line given above a great many kinds of feet,—anapaests, dactyls, trochees, iambi, and what not,—yet the meter is perfectly homogeneous, and the differences in name are due largely to the inadequacy of the system.

Most metrists contend for some method of scansion essentially like the above, but a nota-

ble departure from all the old systems has been made by Mr. Robert Bridges. His little book on prosody seems to me utterly wrong in some of its fundamental principles, but it is nevertheless a work of high order, and every student of prosody owes much to Mr. Bridges' taste, acumen, and learning. He recognizes the inadequacy of ordinary scansions, and feels the need of a new system to conform to actual facts. For example, he aptly quotes Clough's dactylic hexameter,

Yea, and shall hodmen in beershops complain of a glory denied them?

and points out the absurdity of treating *beershopscompl* as one of its component parts. The line, he says, should be divided as follows:

Yea and/shall hodmen/in beershops/complain/of a glory/denied them?

This seems almost to do what the old-fashioned system utterly failed to do; it almost indicates the natural rhythmic divisions of the line. But in order to effect this result, and to cover all varieties of the meter he is analyzing, Mr. Bridges has to employ an appalling number of feet. He enumerates fifteen in all, ranging

from the simple iambus to the foot of five syllables with a stress in the middle (⏑⏑–⏑⏑). He has also deduced a series of laws, which declare when and how the various feet are used, and what kinds of words and syllables are proper to them.

Great ingenuity and patience were requisite for such a task as Mr. Bridges set himself, and he has performed it in a remarkable manner. By his system it seems possible to divide almost any line of good verse into feet which shall be more real than the feet of the old system, just as *inbeershops* is more real than *beershops-compl.* If, therefore, we entertain the notion that feet of some kind are the real components of verse, and that their identity and character must at any cost be discovered and expounded, I think we might find in Mr. Bridges' system something very near to our desideratum. If, on the other hand, we look upon scansion as a mere convenience, we must remain sceptical as to whether this system is really an improvement upon the old one. It is so intricate as to be hardly useful at all; it is merely highly interesting.

That the system is not a scientific or philosophical exposition of the real nature of verse

—that it is not anything more than a convenience—becomes curiously evident when it appears that many excellent lines of verse are not covered by it. Certain lines by Shelley and Coleridge prove baffling to the system. Mr. Bridges says that those poets "had not a consistent practice"; and he adds this significant confession, which seems to me a complete self-betrayal: "A consistent prosody is, however, so insignificant a part in what makes good English poetry that I find that I do not myself care very much whether some good poetry be consistent in its versification or not; indeed I think I have liked some verses better because they do not scan, and thus displease pedants. . . . However, when one is considering prosody and principles of rhythm, it is necessary to attend to that only; and I cannot admit that these verses are good as mere versification."

CHAPTER VI

EMBELLISHMENTS OF VERSE

RHYME is not merely an embellishment of verse, for it has its structural as well as its decorative function; but it behooves us to examine separately the laws that govern it as an embellishment. Such an examination, it is true, will be like that into the snakes of Ireland, for the employment of rhyme is governed not by laws but by irresponsible and indisputable taste; but there is so much confusion of opinion on the subject, and there has been so much futile wrangling about it, that it will be worth while at least to clear the ground.

It is usual to state the laws of rhyme somewhat as follows. First, the last accented vowels of the rhyming words must sound alike; thus *dough* and *so,* or *beaver* and *weaver,* or *die* and *pacify* may rhyme, but not *though* and *do,* or *believer* and *endeavor*. Second, the consonants before the accented vowels must *not* sound alike; thus *dough* and *doe,* or *conception* and *deception,* make what is called an identical rhyme, and fail to satisfy the ear. Third, all the

sounds after the accented vowels must sound alike; thus *thorn* and *dawn,* or *singer* and *finger,* or *idiom* and *quotidian,* do not rhyme.

Everyone understands these laws, but I think only amateur metrists regard them all as universally binding. The first law, most notoriously, is violated by every modern English poet. In Shelley's "Adonais," a poem of fifty-five Spenserian stanzas, there are forty-nine violations; in almost every stanza we find some such rhyme as *love, move,* or *song, strung,* or *blot, thought.* In the most beloved of the short lyrics in Tennyson's "Maud" ("Come into the garden,—") we have *moves, loves; tune, moon; one, alone, gone;* and *blood, stood.* Rhymes of this sort have partly been foisted into our system of verse by changes in pronunciation; for though words that were formerly sounded alike may have become differentiated in speech, their familiar use by old poets sometimes induces us still to accept them as making rhymes. Just how far modern practice is due to this cause it is impossible to say. With the French, the changes wrought by time have affected verse in an opposite manner; for many rhymes which are perfect according to modern pronunciation are deemed inadmissible in French poetry be-

cause the words were once pronounced differently. There are evidently other causes besides the historical one, but they work obscurely in the instincts of our race, and this is not the place to explore them. It need only be said that no formula can be given in exposition of them; the caprices of taste do not lend themselves to generalization. For example, my ear is often perfectly satisfied by the rhyming of *love, move,* and *heaven, given;* but it might perhaps reject the pairing of *wander, under,* or *brown, alone;* yet I cannot say that the latter pairs are more unlike than the former.

The second law of rhyme is more nearly imperative than the first, but some poets violate it with freedom. In "Adonais" there are six identical rhymes, such as *light, delight;* and similar effects are common in Rossetti and Swinburne. In some cases it would be mere pedantry to object to them, as when, for example, the rhyming words are found in the second and seventh lines of a Spenserian stanza, or in the first and eighth lines of a sonnet. In either case there are four lines rhyming together, and two of these lines come between the identical rhymes. Under such circumstances it would take either a superhumanly retentive ear or else some lack of can-

dor to profess that one is offended by the identity. In other cases tastes will inevitably differ. In heroic couplets I myself find identical rhymes unsatisfying; my ear feels cheated, for it expects likeness with a difference, not absolute likeness; but even in the matter of heroic couplets I may not profess that my taste is better than the taste of those who disagree. One reason for the difference in taste in this matter, as also in respect of imperfect rhymes, is that some of us instinctively attach more relative importance to the structural, and others to the decorative value of rhyme. If we are listening only for the echo, for its own sake, we want to be gratified in a particular way, and are somewhat finical about it; while if we are attending solely to the run of the rhythmical periods and their conflict with the line-structure, we tend to be satisfied with any kind of rhyme that is perceptible. Other reasons for the difference are to be found in mere habit. One who likes identical rhymes will be half listening for them; and one who listens for them will like them when they come. As between such attitudes and my own, *non est disputandum*.

The third law seems at first view absolutely obligatory. When Wordsworth rhymes *Hel-*

vellyn with *dwelling,* or *robin* with *sobbing,* the impression upon my ear is distinctly one of slipshod vulgarity. Mrs. Browning was fond of such imperfect rhymes as *brother, lover; burden, disregarding; suitor, future; enter, venture;* and the like. She used them not for convenience but from deliberate choice, finding a gratification in the conflict between the actual and the expected ideal; but to my taste some of her tenderest verses are thereby made hideous. I know of no reason why such rhymes should ever be justifiable; yet if I attempted to dogmatize about them I should be stopped short by the recollection of "The Lady of Shalott."

> His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
> On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
> From underneath his helmet flowed
> His coal-black curls as on he rode,
> As he rode down to Camelot.
> From the bank and from the river
> He flashed into the crystal mirror;
> 'Tirra lirra,' by the river
> Sang Sir Launcelot.

This stanza seems to me very nearly perfect, and I should not dream of objecting to the defective rhyme; yet I have no idea how to argue

in its defense, if anyone else objects to it. Once in a long time I find some other instance of successful violation of the third law, or violation that seems to me successful; but in general I think that the law is very nearly a correct generalization of the taste of most cultivated persons.

Next to rhyme, the chief embellishment of verse is what we call tone-color. Tone-color is given to verse by the preponderance of any particular sound or kind of sounds, whether vowel or consonant. A preponderance of long *a*'s or *o*'s for instance, gives a color very different from that of short *e*'s and *i*'s. "The long day wanes, the slow moon climbs" is in one color; Coleridge's description of the nightingale's song, "with skirmish and capricious passagings," is in another. Much has been written about the effect and meaning of different tone-colors, but I think the subject is still enveloped in some unnecessary mystery. We will consider it only with a view to discovering fundamental principles, so far as they seem discoverable.

A certain learned and well-known student of verse says that (for example) gutturals and sibilants express "amazement, affright, indigna-

tion, contempt," and he cites as an illustration a passage from *Paradise Lost*.

> Out of my sight, thou serpent; that name best
> Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false
> And hateful; nothing wants but that thy shape
> Like his and color serpentine may show
> Thy inward fraud.

One objection to this kind of doctrine is that it makes people think they have no ear for verse, for after careful reading they are still uncertain whether they can detect the effect described. Another objection to it is that it is not true. Compare with the lines quoted this little song from Browning's "Pippa Passes:"

> The year's at the spring,
> And day's at the morn;
> Morning's at seven;
> The hill-side's dew-pearled;
> The lark's on the wing;
> The snail's on the thorn;
> God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world!

This is shorter by four syllables than the passage from Milton, but it has the same number of gutturals and two more sibilants; yet fancy

describing it as an expression of "amazement, affright, indignation, contempt"!

For another illustration, in one of the standard manuals of versification it is pointed out that the surd mutes (*p, k, t*) "help to convey the idea of littleness, delicacy, and sprightliness," and that the short vowel *i* is fitted to express "joy, gaiety, triviality, rapid movement, and physical littleness." To illustrate both assertions, Mercutio's account of Queen Mab is cited:

> She comes
> In shape no bigger than an agate stone, . . .
> Drawn by a team of little atomies.

Here the effect is perhaps easier to recognize, and even an obtuse reader thinks he follows the reasoning; but compare Browning's lines:

> The wroth sea's waves are edged
> With foam, white as the bitten lip of hate.

The "bitten lip" has as many surd mutes and short *i*'s as the "little atomies"; but it fails to express sprightliness, gaiety, or triviality. Another authority, to be sure, says that the surd mutes express "unexpectedness, vigor, explosive passion, and startling effects of all kinds"; but even this catalogue of qualities hardly provides for the "little atomies."

The fact is, of course, that all this analysis of sounds proceeds upon a false assumption. When you say Titan you mean something big, and when you say tittle you mean something small; but it is not the sound of either word that means either bigness or littleness, it is the sense. If you put together a great many similar consonants in one sentence, they will attract special attention to the words in which they occur, and the significance of those words, whatever it may be, is thereby intensified; but whether the words are "a team of little atomies" or "a triumphant terrible Titan," it is not the sound of the consonants that makes the significance. When Tennyson speaks of the shrill-edged shriek of a mother, his words suggest with peculiar vividness the idea of a shriek; but when you speak of stars that shyly shimmer, the same sounds only intensify the idea of shy shimmering.

It is true that many words—such as whizz, bang, murmur, moan—have been created to imitate the things they stand for; and when these words are used in verse it may plausibly be argued that the sound alone conveys a certain sense. But even here the argument is no more than plausible. "Moan" does not in fact

express the idea of moaning more vividly than "mean" the idea of meanness, nor "murmur" the idea of murmuring more vividly than "*marmor*" (to a German) the idea of marble. There are so many imitative words still in our language that they do affect its general coloring, and it may therefore be easier, with words full of *m*'s and *o*'s and *n*'s, to express the idea of moaning than to express careless joyousness, or delight in battle, or perhaps any other mood; but in all cases it is the sense of the words that actually tells. The onomatopoetic origin of our language is a matter of so remote antiquity, and has been so obscured by linguistic changes, that the student of verse may neglect it in his search for fundamental principles.

Tone-color is most obvious in the device of alliteration, and the peculiar effects of alliteration are to be explained partly by another principle—the principle of economy. It is ordinarily easier to utter the same sound twice over than to utter different sounds in close succession; the vocal organs can with less effort be made to assume a position recently abandoned than be forced into a wholly new one. A child a year old may say Papa and Mama, but must

wait many months longer before he can say Panama or Matapan. But, on the other hand, if a sound is a difficult one to make, it may be easier to make it only once, and follow it up with easier sounds, than to repeat it over and over again. "Theophilus Thistlethwaite thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb" is profusely alliterative, but not easy. Thus it comes about that alliteration may give either pleasure or displeasure. Simple alliterative expressions in which the easier consonants are duplicated are agreeable; we have developed such an instinct for them that they seem beautiful; but duplications of difficult sounds are likely not to give effects of grace and ease, but to suggest effort or ugliness.

One of the most beautiful specimens of graceful alliteration is to be found in the first chorus from Swinburne's "Atalanta."

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces
  The mother of months, in meadow or plain,
Fills the shadows and windy places
  With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
    And the brown bright nightingale amorous
    Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
  The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Here the effect of the repeated *m*'s and *l*'s is obvious enough; but even here we must not attribute too much importance to the sound. The principle of economy counts for much, but it will not prevail against the sense of the words. If instead of "the mother of months" we speak of "maniacal madmen," or if instead of "lisp of leaves and ripple of rain" we happen to be saying that "the lurid lightnings lit the livid sky," we find the same alliterations apparently producing a very different effect.

The net result seems to be this. Alliteration (like other effects in tone-color) makes a group of words peculiarly prominent and effective, and intensifies the emotion suggested by their sense, whatever the sense may be; but if the sense is delicate and graceful it is especially helped by an easy alliteration, while if it is strenuous and impetuous it is somewhat more intensified by an uncouth and difficult one. In so far as sound-effects are cultivated without reference to sense, light alliterations and sensuous colors are sought after for their own sakes; but these sounds have no meaning of their own apart from the meanings of the words. When a poet writes a passage in which one tone predominates, we are not to imagine that he has

chosen that tone with deliberate forethought. The tone has chosen itself, by its accidental presence in the words that were first and uppermost in his thought; and he has merely taken pains, in the arrangement of minor expletives and connectives, to select overtones that would accord with and so reinforce the fundamental tones.

I trust I shall not seem insensible to the charm of tone-color in verse when I say that its relative importance is much overrated by the metrists. Tone-color is present in prose also, and every good prose-writer, even every trained speaker, uses it instinctively to reinforce his meaning and to promote euphony. It is unfortunate that so much stress has been laid on the tone-colors of verse by writers and teachers, for people have conceived the notion that they constitute one of the great secrets of poetry; and many persons neglect to cultivate their taste for verse just because they think it is too profound a thing for their comprehension. The fact is that the more elaborate and artificial uses of tone-color are so striking that anyone can feel their effectiveness; and they are the only ones that are common in poetry and not in prose. The reader who misses the subtler effects

in Tennyson or Milton will also miss the subtler effects in Jeremy Taylor and John Bunyan; and the supposed dulness of his ear should no more cut him off from the enjoyment of verse than it does from the enjoyment of prose.

The real greatness of English verse is in its rhythm, and especially in the conflict that arises from the imposition upon the rhythm of metrical limitations. Alliteration, tone-color, and decorative rhyme are mere embellishments.

INDEX

Alexandrine: in Drayton, 41; in heroic verse, 70.
Alliteration, 126–131.
Anapaest, 37.
Anapaestic verse, 103–112, 114–117.

Blank verse, 17, 41–59. *See also* Rhymeless verse.
Bridges, Robert, "Milton's Prosody," 115–117.
Browning, E. B.: *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* 81; loose rhymes, 122.
Browning, Robert: "One Word More," 99; "Saul," 108, 110; "Abt Vogler," 109.
Byron, "Cain," 52–54; "The Corsair," 67; septenaries, 88.

Chaucer: pentameters, 28; heroic verse, 71.
Clough, "The Bothie," 115.
Coleridge: "The Nightingale," 54; definitions of prose and poetry, 59.
Conflict, law of: in tempo, 14; in strong and weak stresses, 20; in number of syllables, 31; in pauses in blank verse, 47–58; in pauses in heroic verse, 65, 69; in stanzas, 76–84; in short meters, 85; in long meters, 89; in trochaic verse, 100; in anapaestic, 107.

Dactyl, dactylic. *See* Anapaest, Anapaestic.
Drayton, 41.
Dryden, 68, 71.

Emphasis, distinguished from rhythmic stress, 33.

Feet: theory of, 35–40; in trochaic verse, 94–98; in anapaestic and dactylic verse, 114–117.
French influence: on pentameter, 29; on heroic verse, 63.

Gilbert, "The Pirates of Penzance," 42.
Goldsmith, heroic verse, 64.
Gray, "Elegy," 72–77.

Henley, "Arabian Nights," 93.
Heroic verse, 17, 60–72.
Hovering accent, 33.
Hunt, Leigh, heroic verse, 71.

Iambic verse. *See* Pentameter, Blank verse, Heroic verse, etc.
Iambus, 37, 38.
Ingelow, Jean, 112.
Inversions: in iambic verse, 24–27; in trochaic, 100, 102.

Keats: "Endymion," 62; "Lamia," 68.
Kipling, "The Last Chantey," 113.

Longfellow, *Hiawatha,* 94, 99, 101.

Meter, distinguished from rhythm, 8–12. *See also* Pentameter, Octosyllabics, Three-stress verse, Alexandrine, Septenary, Anapaestic, Trochaic, Miscellaneous.
Milton: inversions in, 26, 27; "Il Penseroso," 28; syllabic principle in, 29; variety of stresses, 42–44; variety of pauses, 45 ff.
Miscellaneous meters, 112, 113.

Octosyllabics: in "Il Penseroso," 28; symmetry of, 41; need of rhyme in, 90–92.
Onomatopoesis, 126.

Paragraph, rhythmical: in blank verse, 48, 55–58; in heroic verse, 70.
Parsons, James C., "English Versification," 7.
Pauses, variety in, 44–58; in trochaic verse, 100. *See also* Conflict, law of.
Pentameter, iambic, 17–40; superiority of, 41, 88. *See also* Blank verse, Heroic verse.
Periods, rhythmical, 9. *See also* Conflict, law of.
Phillips, Stephen, 31.
Phrasing, 50–57; in anapaestic verse, 108.
Pope, 63–66.
Prose, rhythm of, 3–10, 15.
Pyrrhic, 37; in iambic verse, 39–40.

Quantity, in classical verse, 37. *See also* Tempo.

Rhyme: effects of, in pentameter verse, 60–84; decorative and structural functions of, 60; need of, in most verse, 90–94; laws of, 118–123.
Rhymeless verse, 90–94.
Rhythm: defined, 1; origin of, 2, 6; in prose, 3–8; in verse, 12–15; distinguished from meter, 8–12.
Rossetti, sonnets, 79–84.

Scansion. *See* Feet.
Septenary, 88–90.
Shakespeare, blank verse in late plays, 53.
Shelley: "Alastor," 35; "Adonais," 77; "The Cloud," 105; "The Sensitive Plant," 106; loose rhymes, 119, 120.
Sonnet, the, 79–84.
Spenser, "Spenserian stanza," 77–79.
Spondee, 37; in iambic verse, 39.
Stanza-forms, 72–84.
Stress, rhythmical, 3; distinguished from emphasis, 33; on weak syllables, 18–23, 32, 105–107; variety in, 42–44.
Surrey, *Aeneid,* 45, 47.
Swinburne: "Hesperia," 111; "Super Flumina Babylonis," 112; "Atalanta," 128.
Syllables, number of: in verse and prose, 11; in pentameter, 27–31.

Tempo: variety in, 12–14; in different kinds of verse, 104.
Tennyson: "Ulysses," 13; parody on Wordsworth, 20; extra syllabics in, 31; "Maud," 85; "Idylls," 88; "Locksley Hall," 99; loose rhymes, 119, 122; "The Lady of Shalott," 122.
Three-stress iambic verse, 85–88.
Time element in verse. *See* Rhythm, Tempo.
Tone-color, 123–131.
Trochaic verse, 94–102.
Trochee, 37.

Watson, "Wordsworth's Grave," 76.

Whittier, "Snowbound," 91.
Wolfe, "The Burial of Sir John Moore," 103.
Wordsworth: parody on, 20; "Peele Castle," 76; sonnets, 82; loose rhymes, 121.

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA